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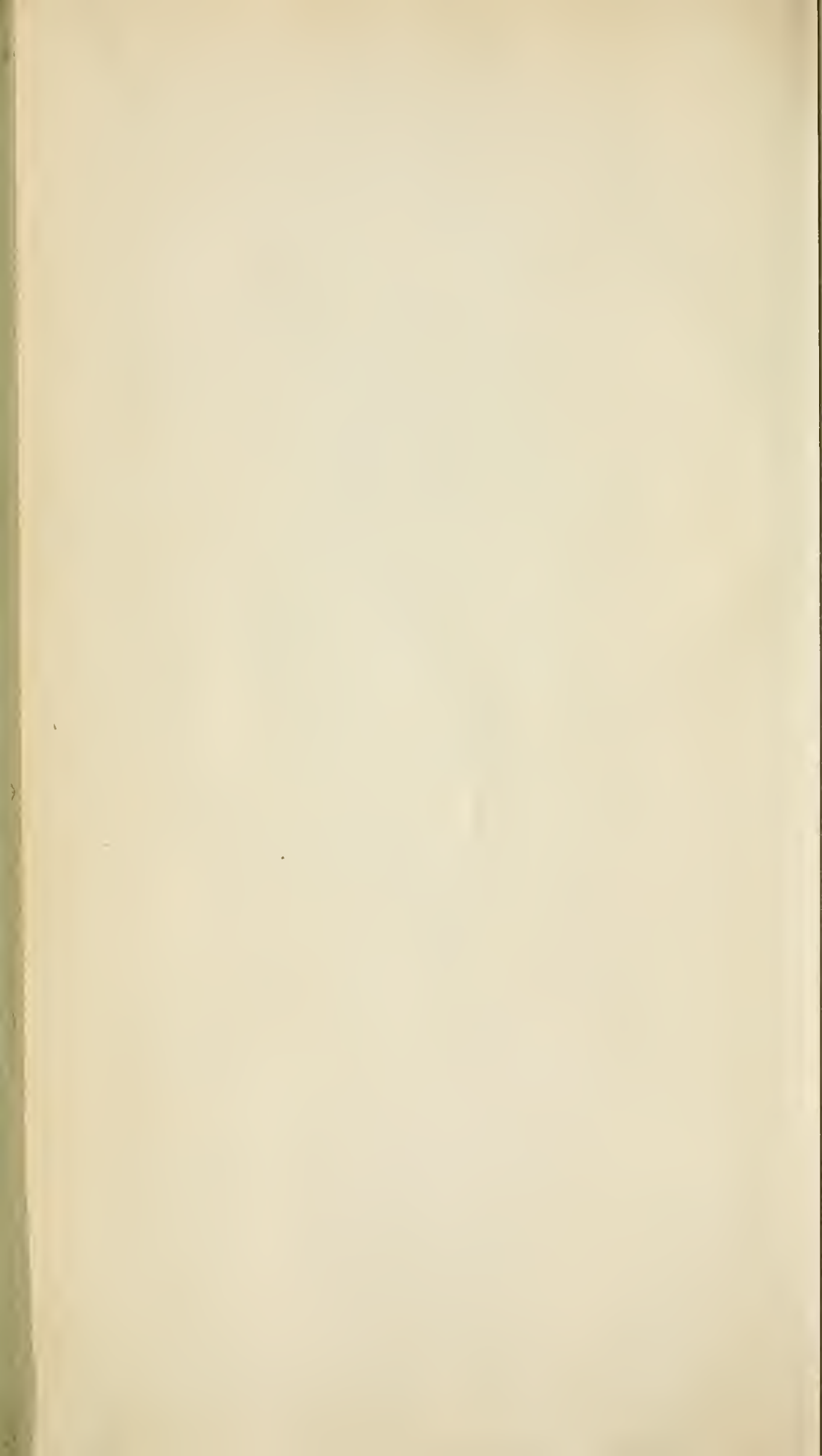
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GALLERY

OF

AMERICAN PORTRAITS.

BY GEORGE WATTERSTON.

THIRD EDITION.

The proper study of mankind is man.

Pope.

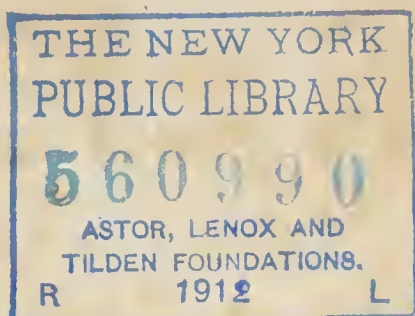
WASHINGTON.

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1836.

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INTRODUCTION.



SEVERAL of the following sketches have already appeared in some of the occasional productions of the author, and received the approbation of the public. It has been suggested by his friends, that as some of these sketches merit preservation, and may possibly be useful to the future historian, and that as they are now interspersed in detached volumes, it would be proper to embody them in one small work, and thus united, give them to the public. In yielding to this suggestion, it may be necessary to remark, that a more intimate acquaintance with those whose characters he has endeavored to portray, has enabled him to make some changes, and add some new traits, which will render the sketches more complete. In all these, he has carefully endeavored to avoid the indulgence of any feeling which might warp his judgment or give too rich or too dark a coloring to the picture he presents. He flatters himself that they will be found as correct as such sketches can be made, without entering minutely into the various shades or slight peculiarities of character. Though some of the individuals described have passed

from the stage of life, their memory is still treasured up in the hearts and affections of their countrymen, and, for the reputation of their country, should be preserved and held up as splendid models of excellence and imitation. America has produced but few such men as Pinckney, Lowndes, and King, and they should not be suffered to float down the oblivious current of time

“Unwept, unhonor’d, and unsung.”

Most of those sketches have been taken from a little work of the author, published in 1818, entitled “Letters from Washington,” and ostensibly written by a British nobleman to his friend in England. To the sketches hitherto published, the author has added some new ones of such of his countrymen as have since become eminent in public life. These he has endeavored to give with as much brevity and accuracy as possible, and he flatters himself they will be found alike free from the coloring of partiality and of prejudice. He regrets that he could not enlarge his gallery by the introduction of the portraits of others, who, though not equally distinguished, are in some cases not less meritorious. This omission must be attributed to the desire of not throwing too many figures at once on his canvass, lest the uniformity might be dis-

agreeable ; and it is a gratifying circumstance that America can boast of so many men of such high and merited distinction.

The author, in the present edition, has added to his former sketches those of several distinguished characters, who now figure prominently on the stage of public life, and the introduction of which will, he thinks, render his little volume more complete and interesting. The very favorable manner in which the former editions have been received, has led him to publish the present one, which from the additional number of sketches introduced, will, he flatters himself, be still more acceptable to the public.

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GALLERY

OF

AMERICAN PORTRAITS.

JAMES MADISON.

This gentleman is the fourth in succession who was raised to the first office in the gift of his country. He is small, but not inelegant, in his person; his body is perhaps too large for symmetrical proportion, and his countenance is grave, but expressive of benevolence. He was of a less vigorous constitution than his immediate predecessor, though not less gifted by nature, or less improved by education. His mind was of a peculiar organization—acute rather than vigorous—profound rather than fertile, but not less comprehensive than subtle. From his earliest years he was accustomed to the momentous questions of national policy, and devoted to the investigation of the great principles of government and the measures best calculated for the national good. His state papers are distinguished for great neatness and precision of style, though they have sometimes been complained of as too diplomatic. His num-

bers in the *Federalist*, written while he was still in his youth, are luminous and powerful expositions of the principles of the Federal Constitution and the views of its framers. These alone, had he done nothing else, would have transmitted his name to posterity, as the productions of a strong and cultivated intellect; but his subsequent usefulness has thrown them partially into the shade, and left a wider and more fertile field in which to rest his fame. His compositions are, I believe, principally, if not exclusively, of a political character, and on subjects of the deepest interest and highest importance to the welfare of his country. As a statesman, Mr. Madison was liberal and profound, rising above the petty cabals and little intrigues of party, and wielding the destinies of the nation for the general good, and not for party purposes. He considered himself the father and friend of his countrymen, against whom a difference of political opinion did not produce hostility of feeling, or excite indignation or vengeance. As a man, he was always agreeable; conversing with freedom on any subject that might be introduced, and amusing his company with humorous anecdotes, of which he possessed a considerable fund. His colloquial powers were of no ordinary character, and were exercised, both in public and private companies, to the great amusement and delight of all who had the happiness to enjoy his society. His political anecdotes were numerous, and told with a humor, neatness, and point, that never failed to please;

and these were the more agreeable, as they were usually unexpected, from the general gravity of his deportment. He was easy, without being courtly in his manners; serious, without the appearance of pride; and occasionally reserved, without being repulsive. In common conversation, he was fluent and impressive, employing a style similar to that of his written compositions, neat, vigorous, and polished. In all the amiable qualities of the heart, none could surpass him: it gratified him to bestow, and pained him to refuse, a favor; and hence he was sometimes charged with leaning too much to that party by which he was so often and so bitterly assailed. He had in him a large portion of "the milk of human kindness," which, not unfrequently, led him to grant favors to those whom he knew to be his enemies, and in all things to seek the good will and approbation of his countrymen, and of the world. Though mild and benevolent in no common degree, he had still sufficient energy of character to carry into execution those purposes, how much soever they might be opposed, which he believed were intended for the general good, or the reputation of his country; nor was he ever diverted from a purpose once deliberately formed, so much by the threats of future injury to himself, as by the fear of doing an act of injustice to another. His humanity often "o'er informed his timent of clay," and produced what the world might conceive to be an act of weakness, but what those who knew him best had no hesitation in ascribing

to its true motive—a sentiment of benevolence, and a desire to do right. Mr. Madison had an utter aversion to every thing like cruelty. Mercy was one of his most distinguishing characteristics; and, I believe, he never could be prevailed upon to consent, during his administration, to sanction the execution of any criminal who had subjected himself to the awful penalty of death, unless his crimes had been of such turpitude and heinousness, as to render the extension of mercy to him pernicious to society. His levees and drawing rooms were generally crowded to excess, because all who went knew they would receive a cordial welcome, and be amused and gratified while they pleased to remain. He was regarded by the young as a father, and by the old as a friend, with whom they felt no reserve, and need be under no restraint. He found it impossible to pursue the plan adopted by his predecessor, in relation to visits; and appropriated one evening in each week for the reception of company of both sexes.

Mrs. Madison seemed to have been qualified by nature for the situation she held. Her person was dignified and majestic; perhaps a little too *embon-point*, fond of society, easy and affable in her manners, and humane and generous in her disposition. She spared no pains to please all who might visit her; and all were pleased, from the most exalted to the most humble. She had a peculiar tact in ingratiating herself into the good opinion of her visitors, who never failed to admire

as much as they loved her. There was nothing in her manner that looked like condescension, or bordered on haughtiness; every thing she did had the appearance of real kindness, and seemed to spring from a sincere desire to oblige and to gratify those who came to see her. To strangers, and such as discovered any degree of diffidence and awkwardness, she was particularly assiduous in her attentions, and soon made them feel perfectly at ease. She never sat, but always moved about the rooms from one group to another, and employed herself in entertaining the company in every possible variety of manner. Her memory was so tenacious, that after a single introduction she could, like Cato, name every gentleman and lady that had been introduced to her; and strangers have often been surprised at the facility with which she could address them by name, when they had no expectation of being known. Her feelings, like those of her husband, were altogether republican; and if she made any distinction at all, it was always in favor of such as were in the more humble walks of life, and might thus think themselves overlooked or neglected.

Mr. Madison is now withdrawn from the stage of public life, and emphatically enjoys, in his elegant retirement, the *otium cum dignitate*, respected by his countrymen, and beloved and honored by his neighbors. Like Themistocles, in Metastasio, when the close of life approaches he can say:

Sia luminoso il fine
 Del viver mio; qual moribonda face.
 Scintellando s'estingua—
 ————— Ardito spiri
 Chi puo senza rossore
 Rammentar come visse allor che muore.

JAMES MONROE.*

I had yesterday the honor of an introduction to Mr. Monroe, the present Chief Magistrate of the United States. "It is seldom," says Dr. Johnson, "that we find men or places such as we expect to find them;" and I must confess that, in the present instance, the truth of this observation has been realized. I found Mr. Monroe a little different from what my fancy had pictured him, but neither a Lilliputian nor a Patagonian. He appears to be between fifty and sixty years of age, with a form above the middle size, compact, muscular, and indicating a constitution of considerable hardiness and vigor; his countenance exhibits lineaments of great severity, and seems as if it had been seldom irradiated by the rays of joy, or softened by the touch of sensibility; he does smile, however, but not like Shakspeare's Cassius,

—————"in such a sort
 As if he mocked himself and scorned his spirit
 That could be moved to smile at any thing."

* The above and several of the following Sketches are principally taken from the "Letters from Washington," published in 1818, and written in the character of an English nobleman.

At these moments, there is a benignity and suavity in him, that invite confidence and repel suspicion. He is rather awkward in his address, for a man who has mingled so much in polite society; and his manners and habiliments are more those of a plain country gentleman, than an accomplished statesman or a profound politician. Awkwardness of manners, however, seems to be more common among the Americans, than I had conceived. Their most eminent men are, I think, deficient in that ease, elegance, and grace, which distinguish the prominent political characters of France and England. The nature of their government has a tendency to beget this, by preventing those sacrifices to the graces, which are made in the more refined and polished nations of Europe. The importance and magnitude of their pursuits, and their general association with what we call the lower ranks of society, preclude the acquisition of those exterior embellishments so industriously cultivated by our countrymen. A disciple of Chesterfield, with all his refinement and fascination, would be regarded in this country as a mere *petit maitre*, calculated only to charm the eye and to fascinate the heart of female ignorance. But I have wandered from my subject. Mr. Monroe is attached to what was once denominated the republican party; for at present all party distinctions seem to be lost, and the parties themselves wholly amalgamated. In his political career, he has manifested the most unimpeachable and unbending integrity, and though

long before the public, has seldom failed to meet the expectations and to gratify the wishes of the people. That he possesses ambition, will not be denied; but his ambition is limited to the attainment of excellence and distinction within the bounds of patriotism and honor. If he has not the unbending sternness of Cato, he has the more pleasing and benignant integrity of Fabricius.

Mr. Monroe entered early into public life, and has performed the various and complicated duties of a soldier, a politician, and a statesman. His mind has been accustomed to dwell on the nature of governments and the revolutions of empires; subjects so vast produce a correspondent enlargement of intellect and sweep of comprehension. The mind which is occupied in trifles will not be apt to amaze by its greatness, or astonish by its magnificence; it may glitter, but will never blaze. The peculiar character and magnitude of Mr. Monroe's pursuits have withheld his attention from the minor and less important subjects of literature, and he is very far from what we should call a man of reading or general science. The knowledge he possesses has been acquired more by personal observation, laborious reflection, and frequent conversation, than by the repeated perusal of books, to which his important occupations would not permit him to devote his time. It is said his mind is neither rich nor brilliant, but capable of the most laborious analysis, and the most patient research—not hasty in its decisions, and not easily changed when its deci-

sions are formed. Judgment appears to have been his prominent intellectual feature ; and in the examination of any object, he seldom suffered it to be darkened by prejudice, or warped by passion.

The greater part of his life has been devoted to the business of government. He has served his country at home and abroad ; and has filled various official stations with general approbation. He was elevated to the chief magistracy at a period most propitious to his fame, and took the reins of Government into his hands by the almost unanimous consent of the American people, who had, for some time, regarded him as the only surviving branch of the Revolutionary stock, to which they owed so large a debt of gratitude. The nation had just emerged from a short but glorious war ; the ebullitions of party feeling and political rancor had begun to subside, and federalism and democracy united in hailing him as their common friend, and the friend of his country. Mr. M. was less affluent than either of his predecessors. From the various employments he has held under the Government, he has been unable to realize more than a bare support for his family, and has retired into the shades of private life without being enriched by the favors of his country. Towards the close of his official career, he seems to have become timid, and dependant on those by whom he was surrounded. This might have been an excess of caution, but it indicated some want of energy and firmness, and

exhibited the appearance of vascillation and doubt, when promptness and decision were required.

Mr. Monroe has never been blessed with male issue, and what is remarkable, out of the five Presidents who have served since the organization of this Government, but one has had sons. I mention this merely as a curious circumstance.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Mr. John Q. Adams is the son of the second President of the United States, and a man of great talent, information, and industry. Mr. Monroe, after his elevation to the Presidential Chair, is said to have discovered much sagacity in the selection of his cabinet council or executive officers. These are the Secretaries of State, War, Treasury, Navy, and Attorney General; all of whom, with one exception, possess the rare gifts of nature in no ordinary degree, and who have already rendered themselves conspicuous in the walks of literature, the fields of eloquence, and on the theatre of politics.

Mr. Adams has distinguished himself in the paths of literature and politics. The early part of his life seems to have been devoted to the acquisition of general knowledge, which has been subsequently augmented by travel, observation, and reflection. He was once attached to the party by whom his father was chosen President, but very

soon after the republican administration came into power, he was induced to change his opinions, and to abandon what might have been the prejudices of education, for principles which I have no doubt he conceived to be more consonant to his feelings, and perhaps more consistent with his ideas of liberty and independence. Whatever may be said as to the motive which produced the change, I have no hesitation in thinking that it originated entirely from principle, and that his feelings and sentiments were more in unison with the party he joined, than the one he had abandoned. The conduct he has since pursued has evinced the integrity of his motives, and the sincerity of his attachment to his party and his country; and the confidence which that country has reposed in him, is an evidence that she also has been influenced by a similar opinion.

Mr. Adams is in person short, thick, and fat, resembling a little in his face the portrait of his father which you have seen, and neither very agreeable nor very repulsive; his head is somewhat bald, and his eye watery, but black and penetrating. He is between fifty and sixty years of age, and seems to be vigorous and healthy. He is regular in his habits, and moral and temperate in his life. To great talent, he unites unceasing industry and perseverance, and an uncommon facility in the transaction of business. Though he has read much, and drank "deep of the Pierian spring," he seems not to solicit the character which literature bestows; and,

what will seem extraordinary to you, chooses rather to be ranked among men of business than among men of science.

Mr. Adams is extremely plain and republican, both in his manners and dress, and labors to avoid alike the foolery of "fantastic fashion," on the one hand, and the vulgar costume of affected eccentricity on the other. He is charitable, though formal, and possessing great warmth and ardor of feeling under an exterior of apparent coldness. The general accuracy of his judgment, and the rectitude of his moral principle, always lead him to do what is right; and if he err, his errors proceed more from the want of correct information, than from any improper bias, or any fixed design to do what is wrong.

He is evidently well skilled in the rhetorical art, on which he has lectured, and in which he displays considerable research and ability. I should infer that his speeches while he was a member of the Senate were more correct and polished, if they were not more eloquent, than those of his coadjutors in legislation. Yet, after all, there is something more required to complete an orator, than the mere knowledge and practice of those principles which rhetoricians have established as the ground work of this art. If there be an absence of that peculiar kind of talent, or want of that peculiar enthusiasm, which propels the mind to embrace with ardor and delight the profession of an orator, the most intimate and accurate know-

ledge, or the most perfect dexterity in the use of the "rhetorician's tools," will be inadequate to produce excellence. And, however skilfully a man may round his periods and balance his sentences, select his phrases or direct their harmony; without that ethereal and incomprehensible power which gives animation to matter, sweeps through nature like the lightning of Heaven, and creates, and embodies, and unfolds—he will still be cold, and tame, and spiritless; correct indeed, but frigid, regular, but insensible.

In the higher walks of eloquence, where the passions are excited and acted on, and the whole mind wrought up to a species of phrenzy by weakening the dominion of reason, Mr. Adams did not excel; but in close argumentation, in logical analysis, in amplification and regular disposition, he is said to have been inferior to none.

Mr. Adams's prominent inclination, however, appears to be political. To be eminent as a statesman is his predominant ambition; and I doubt not he will attain this character from the nature of his mind and the tenor of his studies. Much indeed is required to form a statesman. He must have a mind that will enable him, in some degree, to remove the veil of futurity; to compare the present with the past; to yield to the government of reason, and be uninfluenced by the attractions of passion. "He must comprehend," says Mirabeau,* "all the defects of our social existence, discern the degree of

* Gallery of Portraits, by Mirabeau.

improvement of which we are susceptible, calculate the advantages that result from the possession of liberty, estimate the danger of confusion and tumult, study the art of preparing men for felicity, and conduct them towards perfection, by the plainest and most obvious paths. His survey must extend beyond ordinary limits; he must examine climates, deliberate on circumstances, and yield to events without suffering them to master him."

To extensive research and general knowledge, Mr. A. adds great powers of observation. His residence as Minister at the courts of St. James and St. Petersburg, has enlarged his stock of facts, and rendered his information more correct and practical. He is not one of those statesmen who theorise when experience can afford its aid, and avoid the application of abstract principles, when plainer and more obvious ones are calculated to subserve the object in view. He is sedate, circumspect, and cautious; reserved, but not distant; grave, but not repulsive. He receives, but seldom communicates, and discerns with great quickness, motives however latent, and intentions however concealed by the contortions of cunning, or the drapery of hypocrisy. This penetration seems to be intuitive and natural, and not the result of a mere acquaintance with men, or a long and intimate association with the different classes of society. It is the operation of native judgment, and not the exercise of acquired cunning. This excellence is common to the people of the East; but whether it

originates from education, or from any peculiar organization of the physical powers, I am not sufficiently master of the theory of Helvetius and Godwin to determine. Mr. Adams, it strikes me, has more capacity than genius; he can comprehend better than he can invent; and execute almost as rapidly as he can design.

Though as a public minister, he had no great opportunity to display his powers, yet, from the little he exhibited, a judgment may be formed of his ability in that character. He has all the penetration, shrewdness, and perseverance, necessary to constitute an able diplomatist, united with the capacity to perceive, and the eloquence to enforce, what will conduce to the welfare and interests of his country.*

Mr. Adams is a good writer. He evinces much skill and proficiency in the art of composition, with which he is evidently well acquainted; and as a controvertist no one can surpass him in keenness, dexterity, and power. In short, there is no public character in the United States, that has more intellectual power, the moral inclination to be more useful, or that will labor with greater assiduity to discharge the important duties he owes to himself and to the nation.

While he occupied the Presidential chair, he discovered the depth, coolness, penetration, and ability of the statesman; bending his whole mind to those great measures which must form the basis

* See his correspondence with Don Onis, the Spanish Minister.

of the glory and welfare of his country, and devoting its energies to the promotion of that enlightened and liberal policy which will alone give prosperity and happiness to the American people. Surrounded as he was by men of genius, intelligence, and experience, and stimulated by a high sense of duty, and animated by the warm impulse of patriotism, his administration of the Government will be regarded by posterity as one that will rank, in wisdom, efficiency, and glory, with any that the pen of the Historian of America may yet have to record.

Mr. Adams has now likewise passed off the stage of public life, and withdrawn into the shades of retirement, where, with the consciousness of rectitude, and the lofty conviction that he has done his duty to his country and to society, he will enjoy more unmingled and durable happiness than when surrounded by the trappings of power, and wielding all the patronage of Government. He has now become the subject of history; and posterity will, upon a dispassionate review of his character and actions, render him that justice which some of his contemporaries seem inclined to withhold. Merit is not always the criterion of popular approbation in republics, more than in monarchies; and the example of Mr. Adams will show, that Aristides was not the only one that has been banished for being just. In the fury of party conflicts, the mind is apt to be warped by prejudice, or blinded by passion; and the most gifted and worthy is often, in the struggle

for ascendancy, cast aside to make way for the idol of the moment. It is not till after time has assuaged the bitterness of feeling, or softened down the rancor of party animosity, that the mind can release itself from the infatuation which has warped, or the blindness which has darkened it. Then, and only then, will the errors of judgment be perceived and acknowledged, and the award rendered to worth, virtue, and talent, which they have merited. Of Mr. Adams it may be truly said, in the language of the French poet :

Être vrai, juste, bon, c'est son systeme unique,
Humble dans le bonheur, grand dans l'adversite,
Dans la seule vertu trouvant la volupte.

Destouches.

WILLIAM H. CRAWFORD.*

Mr. Crawford, Secretary of the Treasury, is the same gentleman to whom you were introduced at Paris, and though he possesses great dignity, wants the graceful elegance of manners of which I have previously spoken. What he was thought of in France I cannot inform you ; but it is impossible he could have succeeded amidst the polite and splendid frippery of the Parisian circles—the courtly nonsense and graceful and elegant *nonchalance* of a French politician, must have been strikingly and ludicrously contrasted by the republican simplicity and awkward movements of the American

* From Letters from Washington.

Minister. Mr. Crawford has risen from obscurity to the situation he now holds, by the force of native genius. It appears he was employed in his early life in an occupation which is now unfortunately too much degraded, but which ought to be more highly esteemed. I mean that of "teaching the young idea how to shoot." His next career was at the bar, at which he rapidly acquired both emolument and reputation. The excellence of his understanding, and the superiority of his intellect, soon brought him into public life, where he displayed to advantage those powers with which nature had so eminently gifted him. He became Ambassador to France, and while in that capacity, was appointed Secretary of War, and lastly chosen Minister of Finance. In all these various situations, he has never failed to discover the same powers and energies of mind, and the same acuteness and depth of penetration: he has literally the *mens sana in corpore sano*, and the vigorous and athletic appearance of his body serves as an unerring index to the force and energy of his intellect. It is invidious to make comparisons; but it is by comparisons we are often enabled to arrive at truth. I will therefore endeavor to draw a parallel between two of the gentlemen of whom I have been speaking. Mr. Monroe and Mr. Crawford are alike distinguished by integrity of understanding; but the latter has more quickness, and perhaps equal range of mind. In the specimens of parliamentary eloquence, which are, for the most part, preserved here only in the ephemeral

and fugitive columns of newspapers, and which I have taken the trouble to examine for my own amusement, Mr. Crawford evinces some vigor of imagination, and occasionally some brilliancy of thought.* Mr. Monroe's compositions display only the soundness of his judgment, and the excellence of his sense, without any of the frippery and fastooning of rhetoric, or the meretricious and gaudy drapery of imagination. Mr. Monroe had more practical knowledge, but was less prompt in his decisions. Mr. Crawford had greater powers of invention, but was less skilful in combination. Mr. Monroe had more experience, but Mr. Crawford, from a better memory and a superior quickness of comprehension, had treasured up as many results, and acquired as many facts. Mr. Monroe's knowledge of mankind was more correct and more practical, but he wanted Mr. Crawford's energy to render it extensively useful. In political shrewdness and moral integrity, they were supposed to be nearly equal. With this brief parallel, I shall dismiss these gentlemen, and proceed, at your desire, to sketch the portraits of the Secretary of War and the Attorney General.

* Since the above was written, Messrs. Gales & Seaton have published three volumes of Congressional Debates.

JOHN C. CALHOUN.

Mr. Calhoun* is a young man of about thirty-five years of age : his form is above the middle size, but meagre, bony, and slender : his face wants beauty, but his eye possesses all the brilliancy and fire of genius. He is a native of the South, and has, I understand, been educated for the bar. It is not my intention to enter into any abstract speculations on the influence of climate upon the human intellect. On this subject much ingenuity and learning have been wasted, and the visionary theories of Buffon, Raynal, &c. have been laid aside, as the lumber of the schools, or the idle sportings of fancy ; but it has always appeared to me that some climates are more propitious to genius, and the rapid development of the intellectual powers, than others. The soft and voluptuous climate of Ionia, for example, is better adapted to nourish and expand the genius of man, than the inclement blasts and " thick Boe-tian air" of Northern latitudes. Be this, however, as it may ; whether Mr. Calhoun be indebted to climate, to nature, or to circumstances, for the powers he possesses, he is unquestionably an extraordinary young man. He started up, on the theatre of legislation, a political Roscius, and astonished the veterans around him by the power of his mind, and the singularity and resistlessness of his eloquence. He has the ingenuity without the so-

* Written in 1817-'18.

phistry of Godwin, to whose mind I think his bears some analogy.* On all subjects, whether abstract or ordinary, whether political or moral, he thinks with a rapidity that no difficulties can resist, and with an originality that never fails to delight. He has the brilliancy† without the ornament of Burke, the fire without the literature of Pitt. With an invention which never abandons him, and whose fertility astonishes, he seems to loathe the parade of rhetoric, and the glitter and decorations of art. His style of eloquence is peculiar and extraordinary; without any apparent pageantry of imagination, or any of the flower-woven beauties of language, he seizes on the mind, which, like the unfortunate bird under the influence of fascination, becomes passive and obedient to the power it neither can nor wishes to resist. In the “tempest and whirlwind” of his eloquence, his argumentation is so rapid, his thoughts are so novel, and his conclusions so unexpected, yet apparently correct, that you can neither anticipate nor think; the attention is riveted, and the mind occupied alone with the subject which he is handling, and it is not until the fascination of his manner has subsided that you feel inclined to reason, or become capable of detecting his errors. Even then, his witchery lingers on the imagination, and casts a veil over the judgment which it cannot immediately remove, and which,

* Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Godwin are alike conspicuous for what I call ingenuity, as contradistinguished from imagination.

† Brilliancy is here applied to genius.

in opposition to the strongest efforts, tends to obscure its perceptions, and to weaken its energies. I have heard gentlemen who were associated with him declare, that when he spoke, they were, for some time after he had closed, unable to remove the spell by which they were bound ; and that even by condensing almost to obscurity, they could not answer the whole of his numerous arguments and ingenious deductions, without occupying too much of the time of the House. And yet, he has never been known to attempt but one rhetorical flourish, and in that he unfortunately failed. His oratorical style has none of the embellishments of art, or the witcheries of fancy ; but is, almost to dryness, plain, unadorned, and concise. He has nothing in him poetical ; his creations are not those of imagination, in which I think he is somewhat deficient. You never see him employed in weaving garlands, or strewing flowers on your path ; he never strives to "lap in Elysium," or to delight in the rainbow colors and eractic blaze of fancy. His light is the light of reason, clear, unrefracted and luminous.

Between oratory and poetry, there is, I conceive, an essential difference. Conviction is the object of the orator, and pleasure that of the poet. The powers of mind necessary to produce those different results are not the same : reason governs the one, and imagination the other. The former is confined to argument and truth, the latter to imagery and sentiment. The orator analyzes and rea-

sons, compares and deduces; the poet combines and imitates :

“ His eye in a fine phrenzy rolling,

Doth glance from Heaven to earth, from earth to Heaven,”
and embodies forth the forms of things unknown. The orator must exist in the living world; the poet may live in a world of his own creation. Memory and judgment are the powers employed by the former; imagination and invention, those exercised by the latter. In moving the heart and exciting the passions, they differ only in the means employed to produce this effect; and in this alone they approximate. The examples are numerous to establish the correctness of these positions. Cicero was a great orator, but a bad poet; Pope was a great poet, but a bad orator. In short, oratory and poetry have never been united in one individual. But, to return. With all the excellencies I have mentioned, Mr. Calhoun has some great faults; “ *il n’ appartient,*” says the duke de la Rochefocault, “ *qu’aux grands hommes d’avoir des grands défauts.*” He wants, I think, consistency and perseverance of mind, and seems incapable of long continued and patient investigation. What he does not see at the first examination, he seldom takes pains to search for; but still the lightning glance of his mind, and the rapidity with which he analyzes, never fails to furnish him with all that may be necessary for his immediate purposes. In his legislative career, which, though short, was uncommonly brilliant, his love of novelty, and his apparent

solicitude to astonish were so great, that he has occasionally been known to attempt to realize the dreams of political visionaries, and to propose schemes which he seemed to offer merely for the purpose of displaying the affluence and fertility of his mind. Youth, and the necessary want of experience, may be plead as an apology for these eccentricities of conduct, and apparent aberrations. The wisdom of age, and a more correct and extensive acquaintance with men and things, will doubtless allay the ardor of his mind, and lessen the fervor of his temperament.

Like our eccentric countryman, Darwin, he is capable of broaching new theories, but wants the persevering investigation, tension of thought, and patience of judgment, necessary to bring them to maturity, or to render them beneficial. Men like these are often both very serviceable and injurious to society. In such a body as the Congress of the United States, where the concentrated wisdom of the nation is assembled, such a man's sphere of usefulness cannot be correctly ascertained or defined. Amidst the variety of schemes his ingenuity suggests, and his restless emulation urges him to propose, many will no doubt be found to be practicable; and though he cannot himself pause to mature them, the mass of mind by which he is surrounded, and on which he blazes, will reduce them to shape, and give to his ingenious novelties "a local habitation and a name." In short, Mr. Calhoun is one of those beings whom you can only

trace like the comet, by the light which he casts upon his path, or the blaze which he leaves in his train. He now fills the office of Vice President of the United States, to which he has been elevated by the voice of his countrymen, and which he has held for nearly six years. This should gratify the ambition of so young a man ; but ambition, when once fired, is not easily controlled or repressed ; and the mind bounds forward in its desires, till the goal is attained which has been so long held in contemplation. The course pursued by Mr. Calhoun is not one, however, which is likely to crown his hopes with success, or to raise him to that rank to which his ambition has so long aspired. Whatever may be his genius, or the versatility and extent of his talents, he has, as yet, done nothing in the walks of public life, which would entitle him to the high station at which he aims. His principles, so far as they have been developed, are not such as would harmonize with those of the great majority of his countrymen, and his political views do not seem calculated to promote the true interests of his country. If these be the result of deliberate reflection, and are to form the basis of his future conduct, he may yet have cause to lament his errors, and be constrained to admit that restless ambition does not constitute a statesman, and that successful intrigue does not indicate a man qualified to wield the destinies of a nation. The ruler of a free people, should be one in whom a cool and discriminating judgment is united to great patriotism

and virtue; one whose mind is too elevated and expanded to dabble in the mire of party intrigue, or lose itself in the mazes of political contrivance; one who can proudly say—

I primi oggetti
 Sian de vostri pensieri
 L'onor, la Patria, e quel dovere a cui
 Vi chiameran gli Dei.—*Metes.*

Brilliancy may dazzle and delight, but it may also be worthless and deceptive. The meteor is sometimes mistaken for a star, and it often happens—

Che tra in fiori, e le fronde
 Pur le serpe si asconde, e s'aggira.

HENRY CLAY.*

I shall now introduce you to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Clay, who is a delegate from Kentucky, and who not long ago flourished, you will recollect, as one of the American commissioners at Ghent. He is a tall, thin, and not very muscous man; his gate is stately, but swinging, and his countenance strikingly indicative of genius. As an orator, Mr. Clay stands deservedly high in the estimation of his countrymen. His eloquence is impetuous and vehement; it rolls like a torrent, but like a torrent which is

* Written principally in 1817.

sometimes irregular and occasionally obstructed ; though there is a want of rapidity and fluency in his elocution, yet he has a great deal of fire and vigor in his expression. When he speaks, he is full of animation and earnestness, his face brightens, his eye beams with additional lustre, and his whole figure indicates that he is entirely occupied with the subject on which his eloquence is employed. Mr. Clay does not seem to have studied rhetoric as an art, or to have paid much attention to those artificial divisions and rhetorical graces and ornaments, on which the orators of antiquity so strongly insist. Indeed, oratory, as an art, is but seldom studied in this country. Public speakers here trust almost entirely to the efficacy of their own native powers for success, in the different fields of eloquence, and seek not after the extrinsic embellishments and facilities of art. It is but rarely that they unite the Attic and Rhodian manner, and still more rarely that they devote their attention to the acquisition of those accomplishments which were, in the refined ages of Greece and Rome, considered as so essential to the completion of an orator. Mr. Clay, however, is one the most eloquent speakers of this country, and never fails to produce pleasure as well as conviction. His mind is so organized, that he overcomes the difficulties of the most abstruse and complicated subjects, apparently without the toil of investigation or the labor of research. It is rich, and active, and rapid, grasping at one glance connexions the most

distant, and consequences the most remote, and breaking down with infinite facility the trammels of error, and the cobwebs of sophistry. When he rises to speak, he always commands attention, and almost always satisfies the mind on which his eloquence is intended to operate. The fine intonations of his voice, his commanding person and appropriate action, give a powerful effect to all he says. In these physical graces, he has few equals among his contemporaries. Mr. Clay's mind is too affluent and vigorous to indulge in mere declamation, or to seek after sparkling conceits or tinsel ornaments; and hence, we find in his parliamentary and forensic efforts no labored attempts at effect—nothing like clap-traps—no passages suited for school-boy recitations—no splendid, but idle pictures of imagination, intended merely to please without satisfying the mind. They present a solid and unshaken column of argument—a constant series of logical deductions—a resistless and concentrated mass of thought, based on the immutable principles of truth, and irradiated by the blaze of genius. They exhibit the unbroken energies of an intellect in its vigorous maturity, throwing aside the darkness of error, casting its brilliant coruscations on the path along which it rushes, and penetrating, with the power of intuition, the secret and hidden motives of human action. The warmth and fervor of his feelings, and the natural impetuosity of his character, do not often lead him to the adoption of opinions which are inconsistent with

the dictates of true policy and wisdom. In all he does he is propelled by a love of country; and though solicitous of distinction, he wishes to attain the pinnacle of greatness without infringing the liberties, or marring the prosperity of that land of which it seems to be his glory to be a native.

The prominent traits of Mr. Clay's mind are, quickness, penetration and acuteness; a fertile invention, discriminating judgment, and good memory. His attention does not seem to have been much devoted to literary or scientific pursuits, unconnected with his profession; but, fertile in resources, and abounding in expedients, he is seldom at a loss, and if he is not at all times able to amplify and embellish, he never fails to do justice to the subject which has called forth his eloquence. In short, Mr. Clay has been gifted by nature with great intellectual superiority, which will always give him a decided influence in whatever sphere it may be his destiny to revolve.

Mr. Clay's manners are plain and easy; he has nothing in him of that reserve which checks confidence, and which some politicians assume; his views of mankind are enlarged and liberal, and his conduct as a politician and a statesman has been marked with the same enlarged and liberal policy. His views are the views of a statesman, profound, expansive, and luminous. He has applied his mind with intensity to the great sources of national prosperity and happiness; and though, in bringing them into action, and applying them to the condi-

tion of his country, he has been opposed by prejudice and resisted by ignorance, the convictions of his judgment and the ardor of his patriotism have led him to persevere, till the accomplishment of his labors is no longer visionary or distant. The debt of gratitude which his country owes him, posterity will be able to appreciate. The result of his wisdom will then be unfolded, and the countless blessings which will flow from it will be felt and enjoyed by millions yet unborn. Though educated for the bar, and obliged to practise law as a profession, nature seems to have intended him for a statesman. With great genius, he is yet a man of business; *par negotiis neque supra erat*. Though occupied with subjects almost co-extensive in importance with the universe, he still descends to the little details of official duty, and the ordinary business of the world. He is prompt in his decisions, and active and fearless in the execution of his designs; stooping to no meanness, and retarded by no dread of consequences, in the performance of what he feels to be his duty, or what he conceives will conduce to the interests of his country; ardent in his attachments, and although open, yet generous in his enmities. He possesses a nobleness of sentiment, a loftiness of soul, and a grandeur of intention, which mingle in whatever he says or whatever he does, and which give him, in all his connexions with society, an influence and standing that it is difficult to resist. His motto always has been—

——— *La patria e un Nume
A cui sacrificar tutto e permesso. METES.*

He is precisely the man I should select to exhibit to the European world as a fine specimen of the American character ; bold, enterprising, independent and persevering, with a genius that shrinks at no impediments, and a mind that quails at the aspect of no danger. Emerging from obscurity and indigence, and rising by rapid gradations to the rank of an orator, legislator, minister and statesman, he is the same in all, and in all displays that versatility and power which are the characteristics of genius. St. Pierre has said that genius is the art of observation ; but it requires genius to observe. Mr. Clay has been a close and accurate observer of men and things, and has suffered nothing to escape him which could add to the inexhaustible resources of his mind. His knowledge of men has not been derived from books, but from a long intercourse with the living world, in which he has mingled as much from necessity as choice. The various scenes through which he has passed, has enabled him to see and study the diversified character of his species, and to comprehend the influences under which they act, and the motives and principles by which they are governed. His devotion to the cause of liberty has been manifested in every act of his life. The spread of universal freedom seems to be the first and strongest impulse of his heart, and whether she flaps her wings over the Cordilleras of America, or reposes on the classic plains or delicious valleys of Greece, she has always met in him a friend that no casualty could

alter, and no personal interest could change. He wielded an almost magic power over a legislative body, and exercises nearly the same fascination over those who come within the range of its influence. But this is the ascendancy of genius—the sway of mind, which, like the rarified air, will rise above the denser atmosphere that surrounds it.—There are in Mr. Clay's manners so total an absence of all hauteur, so much apparent candor, and such an evidence of open-heartedness, that no one can refuse him his confidence when he becomes acquainted with him. There is nothing of aristocracy lurking in his heart, and as little of that contemptible pride which will not stoop to notice the lowly and humble, though meritorious and worthy, because they are not decorated with the trappings of power, or surrounded by the glitter of wealth.—No man has, however, been more the object of calumny and vituperation than this distinguished statesman. But this seems to be the lot of all who, in this country, have reached political eminence ; and to this painful ordeal must every one be subjected who desires to wing his flight to the temple of political fame.

WILLIAM WIRT.*

I will now bring before you another prominent personage, who figures in this government, and of whom you have requested me to give you some account. Mr. Wirt, the attorney general of the United States, has distinguished himself by his literary and forensic labors. In his person, he is more attractive and elegant, and in his manners more graceful and easy, than some of the gentlemen I have mentioned. Mr. Wirt is a native of Maryland, and, like Socrates, owes his being to parents who existed in the humbler walks of life. Without a regular or academic education, without patronage, and without influential and powerful connexions, he has made his way through the difficulties by which he was surrounded, to the high sphere in which he now revolves. His example furnishes another evidence of the excellence of this government, which opens so easy a path to genius, industry, and exertion. Mr. Wirt, in his youth, was distinguished by a brilliant and romantic fancy, and a facility in the acquisition of knowledge. At the death of his father, he was left under the guardianship of a gentleman in the State of Maryland, who is said to have been well versed in the Greek and Latin languages, in which he was so good as to instruct his ward. In a few years the guardian paid the debt of nature, and left his young charge

* Written in 1817.

to buffet the storms of life as he could. The death of Dr. Hunt not only deprived Wirt, but the neighborhood, of a good teacher, and an excellent friend, and the loss was deemed irreparable, unless supplied by Wirt himself, who had made no inconsiderable proficiency in the dead languages and other branches of knowledge, and who, as he was now without fortune, and destitute of other means of support, consented to officiate as a preceptor. In this situation he continued only until he had made himself acquainted with the principles of the legal science, under the direction of Judge Edwards, with whom he had formed an acquaintance, and in whose house he boarded for the benefit of his instruction. Being now prepared for the practice of the law, but entirely destitute of funds, a neighbor and a friend furnished him with a horse, and money enough to enable him to proceed to Fauquier, in Virginia, his point of destination, where he took up his residence, and commenced the practice of his profession. He had not been long at the bar before he entered into the connubial state, and became the husband of a respectable young lady of the county in which he resided.

I have been informed that soon after this, he was prevailed upon to accompany a friend to the rustic church of the divine he so eloquently and poetically describes in his "Spy." He entered and took his seat; he neither noticed the congregation nor the sightless Demosthenes that addressed him, and was fast sinking into the arms of the

drowsy deity, when instinctively, and with an impulse he could neither control nor repress, he started from the bench on which he sat, as if struck by electricity, and gave his whole attention to the discourse of the preacher, whose bursts of eloquence had thus roused him from his stupor and rivetted his every faculty as if by enchantment. What moral effect the eloquence of Doctor Waddell had upon Mr. Wirt, I am not able to say, but it is certain, that soon after this event he removed to Richmond, where he underwent a change in his religious opinions, and was chosen by the then governor of the State, Mr. Monroe, one of his privy counsellors. From that epoch he rose rapidly in his profession, and in the estimation of the public. His "Spy" gave him a reputation which his eloquence at the bar tended to establish, and the fortune and respectability of the lady to whom he is now united, enlarged the circle of his friends, and extended his sphere of action. While engaged in the practice of the law at Richmond, he employed his leisure in the composition of a work entitled "The Old Bachelor," which was published in numbers, after the manner of the Spectator, and which displays the taste and talent of the author. He has more recently endeavored to add to the just fame he has acquired, by preparing for the press a life of Patrick Henry, whose eloquence cannot be admired too much, and whose character he has, on all occasions, been fond of portraying. As an evidence of

the respect in which he was held by his adopted State, the vacant situation of senator of the United States was offered him by the legislature of Virginia, but he refused to accept it. Since that, he has been elevated by the President to the post of Attorney General of the U. States,* which I presume is more congenial to his feelings, as it doubtless is more consistent with those professional pursuits and studies, to which he has been for many years assiduously devoted. I must now beg leave to close this rapid biographical outline. As an apology for its defects, I have nothing to offer. The facts it contains have been furnished me by those who have been long and intimately acquainted with Mr. Wirt, and I flatter myself, that notwithstanding its brevity and imperfections, it will be read with some little interest.

Of the literary productions of Mr. Wirt, the general character is brilliancy of coloring, redundancy of rhetorical embellishment, and a fondness for poetical imagery. The characteristic feature of his mind is fancy, the too free indulgence of which leads him into occasional hyperboles, not always consistent with the sober dictates of sound sense, or the canons of correct taste. The remarks which Johnson applies to Collins, may be, I think, not inaptly applied to the subject of these observations. "He loves fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he

* This situation he held till the recent change in the Administration induced him to throw up his commission and remove to Baltimore, where he employs himself more profitably in private practice.

delights to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, and to repose by the water-falls of Elysian gardens."* Mr. Wirt does not seem to search for imagery, or to labor after the splendid but fugitive coloring of fancy. From the native fertility of his imagination, this is rendered unnecessary, and new creations spring up in his mind, which are as striking as they are unexpected and beautiful. There is a want of classical simplicity, however, in his earlier compositions, which can only be imputed to his occasional love of splendor, and fondness for poetical embellishment. The subjects in which he most excels, and in which he displays the best specimens of his style of writing, are those of elocution and oratory, which may be found interspersed throughout all his literary works. His style of speaking bears a strong affinity to his style of writing, and blazes not unfrequently with the effulgence of Curranian eloquence; but the splendor of Curran is chiefly calculated for the modern rostrum; and at the bar, in the pulpit, or the senate, may sparkle on the fancy, without deeply affecting the heart, and play around the imagination without rousing the feelings or convincing the judgment.

But whatever were the errors into which Mr. Wirt may have fallen, at the commencement of his oratorical career, from false imitation or a brilliant fancy, his good sense has since enabled him to shun them, and to adopt a more chaste, correct,

* Dr. Johnson's Life of Collins.

and polished style of speaking and writing. As you have never had an opportunity of seeing any of his speeches, I will send you a few extracts from one of his specimens of oratory, in the case of Aaron Burr, who was tried, some years ago, for treason. The orator, after describing the character of Burr, proceeds to give the following picture of Blannerhasset, an Irishman, who had come to this country to avoid what he called persecution, and who had retired to a beautiful island in the Ohio: "But he carried with him," says Mr. Wirt, "taste, science, and wealth, and 'lo! the desert smiled.' Possessing himself of a beautiful island in the Ohio, he rears upon it a palace, and decorates it with every romantic embellishment of fancy. A shrubbery that Shenstone might have envied blooms around him; music that might have charmed Calypso and her nymphs, is his; an extensive library spreads its treasures before him; a philosophical apparatus offers to him all the secrets and mysteries of nature; peace, tranquillity, and innocence shed their mingled delights around him, and to crown the enchantment of the scene, a wife, who is said to be lovely even beyond her sex, and graced with every accomplishment that can render it irresistible, had blessed him with her love, and made him the father of her children. In the midst of all this peace, this innocence, this tranquillity, this feast of the mind, this pure banquet of the heart, the destroyer comes; he comes to turn this paradise into hell; yet the flowers do not wither at

his approach, and no monitory shuddering through the bosom of their unfortunate possessor, warns him of the ruin that is coming upon him." Blannerhasset is caught in the toils which the arch traitor has set to ensnare him, and he becomes a willing accomplice in the conspiracy. The result is thus described by the orator :

"No more he enjoys the tranquil scene ; it has become flat and insipid to his taste ; his books are abandoned ; his retort and crucible are thrown aside ; his shrubbery blooms and breathes its fragrance upon the air in vain ; he likes it not ; his ear no longer drinks the rich melody of music ; it longs for the trumpet's clangor, and the cannon's roar ; even the prattle of his babes, once so sweet, no longer affects him ; and the angel smile of his wife, which hitherto touched his bosom with ecstasy so unspeakable, is now unfelt and unseen. His enchanted island is destined soon to relapse into a desert ; and in a few months we find the tender and beautiful partner of his bosom, whom he lately 'permitted not the winds of summer to visit too roughly,' we see her shivering, at midnight, on the winter banks of the Ohio, and mingling her tears with the torrents that froze as they fell. Yet this unfortunate man, thus deluded from his interest and happiness, thus seduced from the paths of innocence and peace, thus confounded in the toils which were deliberately spread for him, and overwhelmed by the mastering spirit and genius of another ; this man, thus ruined and undone, and

made to play a subordinate part in his grand drama of guilt and treason; this man is to be called the principal offender; while he by whom he was thus plunged and steeped in misery, is comparatively innocent—a mere accessory. Sir, neither the human heart nor the human understanding will bear a perversion so monstrous and absurd; so shocking to the soul; so revolting to reason.”

By comparing these passages with some of Curran's *crim. con.* speeches, you will discover a strong similitude, and an evident imitation; though the American orator does not fall far short of his Irish prototype in picturesque effect, and in splendor of painting.

Mr. Wirt is now about fifty years of age; his face is full and still handsome; his features are regular and well proportioned; his eye black and animated; his body large and inclined to corpulency; and his voice still strong and well modulated. His diction is rapid and flowing, his elocution easy and graceful, and his action neither theatrical nor extravagant, but suited to the sentiment and adapted to the expression. As a jurist, he is profoundly read; not seeking distinction in wire-drawn subtleties or minute and refined technicalities, but in the application of the settled and comprehensive principles of jurisprudence; studying it as a science, and bringing it to bear on the various modifications of civil and personal rights and wrongs. As an orator, his power is acknowledged and his fascination irresistible; and as a man, he stands high in the scale of moral excellence.

WILLIAM PINCKNEY.†

Mr. William Pinckney is a native of Maryland. His parents, though indigent and obscure, were yet animated by a strong desire of making their son illustrious. To effect this object, they exerted every effort within their power, and gave him such an education as their limited means would warrant. Mr. Pinckney was an orator by nature. When very young, and while speaking in a little debating club which had been established by some young men in Annapolis, to improve themselves in elocution, he excited the notice of a gentleman conspicuous for his talents, who had accidentally attended the society. Mr. Chase immediately extended to him his patronage and assistance; and under the auspices of so able an instructor, and so powerful a friend, young Pinckney soon developed those extraordinary powers with which the beneficent hand of nature had endowed him. He studied the law in the office of his patron, and soon prepared himself for the bar, where, at his first appearance, he gave those promises of ability and greatness, which he has subsequently fulfilled. Mr. Pinckney has occupied some honorable and important stations under the American Government; and though, in the discharge of his official functions, he has not fully realized public expectation, yet he has not fallen very far below it.

† Written in 1817.

Mr. Pinckney is between fifty and sixty years of age. His form is sufficiently elevated and compact to be graceful, and his countenance, though marked by the lines of dissipation, and rather too heavy, is not unprepossessing or repulsive. His eye is rapid in its motion, and beams with the animation of genius; but his lips are too thick, and his cheeks too fleshy and loose for beauty; there is, too, a degree of foppery, and sometimes of splendor, manifested in the decoration of his person, which is not perfectly reconcileable to my ideas of mental superiority; and an appearance of voluptuousness about him which is only calculated to suit the meridian of Greece and the soft and debilitating climate of the Egean isles, but which cannot surely be a source of pride or of gratification to one whose mind is so capacious and elegant. I should imagine, however, that this character was barely assumed for the purpose of exciting a higher admiration of his powers, by inducing a belief that, without the labor of study, or the toil of investigation, he can attain the object of his wishes, and become eminent without deigning to resort to that painful drudgery by which meaner minds are enabled to arrive at excellence and distinction. At the first glance, no one could believe, from his external appearance, that he was in the least degree intellectually superior to his fellow men. But Mr. Pinckney is indeed a wonderful man, and one of those beings whom the lover of human nature feels a delight and pride in contemplating. His

mind is, I think, of the very first order—quick, expanded, fervid and powerful. The hearer is at a loss which most to admire—the vigor of his judgment, the fertility of his invention, the strength of his memory, or the power of his imagination. Each of these faculties he possesses in an equal degree of perfection, and each is displayed in its full maturity when the magnitude of the subject on which he descants, renders its operation necessary. This singular union of the rare and precious gifts of nature has received all the strength education could afford, and all the polish and splendor art could bestow. Under the cloak of dissipation and indolence, his application has been indefatigable, and his studies unintermitted ; the oil of the midnight lamp has been exhausted, and the labyrinths of knowledge have been explored.

Mr. Pinckney is never unprepared and never off his guard ; he encounters his subject with a mind rich in all the gifts of nature, and fraught with all the resources of art and study. He enters the list with his antagonist armed like the ancient cavalier, cap a pe ; and is alike prepared to wield the lance, or to handle the sword, as occasion may require. In cases which embrace all the complications and intricacies of law, where reason seems to be lost in the ocean of technical perplexity, and obscurity and darkness assume the dignified character of science, he displays an extent of research, a range of investigation, a lucidness of reasoning, and a fervor and brilliancy of thought, that excite our wonder, and

elicit our admiration. On the driest, most abstract, and uninteresting questions of law, when no mind can anticipate such an occurrence, he occasionally blazes forth in all the enchanting exuberance of a chastened, but a rich and vivid imagination, and paints in a manner as classical as it is splendid, and as polished as it is brilliant. In the higher walks of eloquence, where the passions and feelings of our nature are roused to action or lulled to repose, Mr. Pinckney is still the great magician whose power is resistless, and whose touch is fascination. His eloquence becomes sublime and impassionate, majestic and overwhelming. In calmer moments, when these passions are hushed and the mellowness of feeling has assumed the place of agitation and disorder, he weaves around you the fairy circles of fancy, and calls up the golden palaces and magnificent grottoes of enchantment. The imagination is fired, and you seem to stroll amidst bowers of roses and regions of eternal verdure, where you are fanned to repose by the breath of zephyrs shedding "ambrosial sweets," and lulled to forgetfulness by the seraphic harmony of Elysian songsters. You listen with rapture as he rolls along; his defects vanish, and you are not conscious of any thing but what he pleases to infuse. From his tongue, like that of Nestor, "language more sweet than honey flows," and the attention is constantly riveted by the successive operation of the different faculties of the mind. There are no awkward pauses, no hesitation for the want

of words or of arguments ; he moves forward with a pace sometimes majestic, sometimes graceful, but always captivating and elegant. His order is lucid, his reasoning logical, his diction select, magnificent and appropriate, and his style flowing, oratorical and beautiful. The most labored and finished composition could not be better than that which he seems to utter spontaneously, and without effort. His judgment, invention, memory and imagination, all conspire to furnish him at once with whatever he may require to enforce, embellish, or beautify what he says. On the dullest subject he is never dry, and no one leaves him without feeling an admiration at his powers that borders on enthusiasm. His satire is keen, but delicate ; and his wit scintillating and brilliant. His treasure is exhaustless :—possessing the most extensive and varied information, he never feels at a loss ; and he ornaments and illustrates every subject he touches. He is never the same ; he uses no common-place artifice to excite a momentary thrill of admiration ; he is not obliged to patch up and embellish a few ordinary thoughts, or set off a few meagre and uninteresting facts ; his resources seem to be as unlimited as those of nature, and fresh powers and new beauties are exhibited whenever his eloquence is employed. A singular copiousness and felicity of thought and expression, united to a magnificence of amplification and a purity and chastity of ornament, gives to his eloquence a sort of enchantment which it is difficult to describe.

Mr. Pinckney's mind is in a high degree poetical. It sometimes wantons in the luxuriance of its own creations, but these creations never violate the purity of classical taste and elegance. He loves to paint when there is no occasion to reason, and addresses the imagination and passions when the judgment has been satisfied and enlightened.

I speak of Mr. Pinckney at present as a forensic orator. His career as a legislator was too short to afford an opportunity of judging of his parliamentary eloquence; and perhaps, like Curran, he might have failed in a field in which it was anticipated he would excel, or at least retain his usual pre-eminence. Mr. Pinckney, I think, bears a stronger resemblance to Burke, than to Pitt; but in some particulars he unites the excellencies of both. He has the fancy and erudition of the former, and the point, rapidity, and elocution of the latter. Compared with his countrymen, he wants the vigor and shadowy majesty of Clay, the metaphysical power and ingenuity of Calhoun: but as a rhetorician he surpasses both. In his action, Mr. Pinckney has unfortunately acquired a manner (borrowed, no doubt, from some illustrious model) which is far from being elegant. It consists in raising one leg on a bench or chair before him, and in thrusting his right arm in a horizontal line from his side, to its full length in front. This action is uniform, and never varies or changes in the most tranquil flow of sentiment, or the grandest burst of impassioned eloquence. His voice, though not naturally good, has been

disciplined to modulation by art, and if it be not always musical, it is never very harsh or offensive. Such is Mr. Pinckney as an orator. As a diplomatist, but little can be said that will add to his reputation. In his official notes and communications there is too great a diffusiveness for beauty or elegance of composition. It is but seldom the orator possesses the requisites of the writer, and the fame which is acquired by the tongue sometimes evaporates through the pen. As a writer he is inferior to the present Attorney General,* who unites the powers of both in a high degree; and thus, in his own person, gives a favorable illustration of the position which he has laid down as to the universality of genius.

So great was Mr. Pinckney's anxiety to sustain the reputation which he had acquired, that, though laboring under severe indisposition, he could not be prevailed upon to suspend his exertions in an important suit, in which he was engaged before the Supreme Court, till he recovered; and in a speech of two days' duration, and of more than usual power and eloquence, he is said to have broken a blood vessel, and thus fell a lamented victim to the united impulse of duty and fame.

Mr. Pinckney now slumbers with the dead. A plain tomb stone covers the body of him on whom listening Senates hung with admiration. His ashes now mingle with the dust of those who once, like himself, occupied a large space in the public mind.

* Mr. Wirt.

—and, like himself, were stimulated by the love of fame, or animated by the glow of patriotism. While the eye of the melancholy wanderer who visits the burial ground of our City, falls upon the last resting place of this once gifted individual, and feels

“The death-like silence and the dread repose”

which reigns around, how eloquent is the language of Pindar: “We are shadows; and the dreams of shadows are all that our fancies imagine.”

WILLIAM LOWNDES.†

Permit me now to bring before you another prominent member of the body I have been describing. I know you will readily pass over the imperfections of his person and figure, his quixotic countenance, lank, lean and rueful; his tall, slender and emaciated form, and all the inelegancies and defects of his body, when you are informed that this man stands deservedly in the first rank of American statesmen. Mr. Lowndes, like Mr. Calhoun, is from the south. He is a man of wealth and of probity; modest, retiring and unambitious; but his mind is vigorous, comprehensive and rapid. He is Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, and in that situation has discovered a profound and extensive knowledge of finance; a subject in itself dry and difficult, and to which very few of the citizens

† Written in 1817.

of this country have devoted much of their leisure. To Mr. Lowndes, however, it appears to be a branch of political science, peculiarly pleasing, and to which he is much addicted, both from inclination and habit. He is not only an able political economist, but a skilful statist. And for your further information, I will draw the distinction in the language of Peuchet,* who has given it more correctly than any writer I have yet had the opportunity of reading. "The first, or political economy, conceives, produces and puts in execution the truths or principles of administration, whose utility it establishes, by reasoning, supported by comparison of facts. The second, or statistics, is occupied in preparing the elements proper to guide the mind; it collects details, which it forms into one head, and establishes results founded upon an analysis sufficiently complete to produce moral certainty."

Mr. Lowndes never takes up an opinion, or adopts a theory that has not been sanctioned by his own judgment, or that cannot bear the test of logical analysis. His mind possesses a mathematical tact, and every subject which presents itself and which cannot be demonstrated, is rejected or admitted with hesitation and doubt. In the fields of fancy he but seldom suffers himself to loiter; the glitter of imagination neither dazzles nor delights him, and he prefers rather to wander through the sombre groves of philosophy, than to stroll amidst the enchanted palaces and magic haunts of fiction.

* Statistique Elementaire.

His memory is powerful and retentive, and furnishes him, in an instant, with whatever he may have wished to retain; but he is no orator; his voice is low and feeble, his gesticulation awkward and inelegant, and his whole manner unprepossessing and defective. What he says, however, is said with perspicuity and force, and carries with it conviction to the mind. In speaking, he has no exordiums or perorations; he marches, like Homer, to the point at once, and endeavors to satisfy the judgment, without deigning to tickle the fancy. I do not conceive that the highest powers are required to form an orator of the present day. It is not essential that he should plunge into the labyrinth of science, or be conversant with the intricacies of art. The truth is that sound sense and virtue are the "*principium et fons*" of fine oratory, as well as of good writing. The orator must indeed feel the common interests and passions of our nature more intensely, to be capable of directing our prejudices, of controlling our will, or exciting our feelings; but still his object is not always to inform, but to propel and stimulate the mind to action. For this purpose, it is sufficient that his sensibilities are acute, that his knowledge of mankind is accurate, and that his acquaintance with the common affairs and transactions of life is not more imperfect than that of those around him. His business is with the living world, and with the common feelings and passions and prejudices of our nature. We do not wish him to exhibit the philosopher or the poet; but we wish

him to be always clear, luminous and persuasive; not to create new worlds; but to conduct us through the one we occupy; not to sport in the rainbow, or to flutter on a moon beam; but with the torch of truth, to illumine our path and to lead us in safety through the darkness of error, and the obscurity of ignorance. And all this he can do without a mind of vast general powers or a more than ordinary extent of knowledge. Mr. Lowndes seems to be aware of his defects and does not wish to excel as an orator: his object is of a more extended and comprehensive character; his ambition is the ambition of virtue, and he aspires to the lofty and imposing elevation of a statesman and a patriot. The contracted views and paltry intrigues of party are beneath the dignity of his mind, and revolting to the virtues of his heart: and he labors not for adventitious and fleeting reputation, but for the permanent good and lasting glory of his country. When he addresses the House, every ear is attentive, lest any thing should escape, and every mind is satisfied, because the truths which have been uttered were recommended by the charms of virtue, and arrayed in the simple beauty of moral worth. He possesses great sensibility of heart, and great delicacy of feeling; he would rather relinquish the exultation of triumph over his antagonist in argument, than experience the pain of having inflicted a wound on his vanity. I know not for what station destiny has designed him, but his mind would qualify him for almost any thing; he realizes the

idea which Mirabeau has formed of a statesman.—“This word,” says he, “presents to the mind the idea of a vast genius, improved by experience, capable of embracing the mass of social interests, and of perceiving how to maintain true harmony among the individuals of which society is composed, and an extent of information which may give substance and union to the different operations of government.”* The great talents and high standing of Mr. Lowndes, induced the executive of this country to offer him the situation of Minister of War; but he refused to accept it, and seems to be satisfied with the condition to which his constituents have elevated him, and which, I presume, he can retain as long as he feels inclined to do so. Of the private character of this gentleman, I know nothing; but I should infer, from my short acquaintance with him, that he is as conspicuous for moral as for intellectual excellencies, and that in the humbler and less brilliant walks of domestic life, though he may not acquire so much reputation, he is still not less distinguished than in the blaze of political splendor.

Mr. Lowndes lived but a few years after the above was penned. He paid the debt of nature on his passage to Liverpool, for the benefit of his health, deeply lamented by his countrymen, by whom his memory is still fondly cherished. His extraordinary merit had pointed him out as one eminently qualified to fill the Executive Chair of his

* Mirabeau's Gallery of Portraits.

country ; to which, if death had not so early closed his career, he would most probably have been elevated. When applied to, on this subject, he made the following memorable reply: "It is an honor which is neither to be solicited nor declined."

It is due to the memory of so distinguished a man, and would be useful to his countrymen, that his speeches should be collected and given to the world with some memoir of his life ; which, though not eventful, would nevertheless be replete with instruction. I trust that some friend will yet undertake it, for the honor of his name and that of his country.

RUFUS KING.*

Mr. King is now about sixty years of age, above the middle size, and somewhat inclined to corpulency. His countenance, when serious and thoughtful, possesses a great deal of austerity and rigor ; but at other moments it is marked with placidity and benevolence. Among his friends, he is facetious and easy ; but when with strangers, reserved and distant --apparently indisposed to conversation and inclined to taciturnity ; but when called out, his colloquial powers are of no ordinary character, and his conversation becomes peculiarly instructive, fascinating and humorous. Mr. King has read and reflected

* Written in 1818.

much; and though long in public life, his attention has not been exclusively devoted to the political sciences, for his information on other subjects is equally matured and extensive. His resources are numerous and multiplied, and can easily be called into operation. In his parliamentary addresses he always displays a deep and intimate knowledge of the subject under discussion, and never fails to edify and instruct, if he sometimes ceases to delight. He has read history to become a statesman, and not for the mere gratification it affords. He applies the experience of ages, which the historical muse exhibits, to the general purposes of government, and thus reduces to practice the mass of knowledge with which his mind is fraught and embellished. As a legislator, he is perhaps inferior to no man in this country. The faculty of close and accurate observation, by which he is distinguished, has enabled him to treasure up every fact of political importance that has occurred since the organization of the American Government; and the citizen, as well as the stranger, is often surprised at the minuteness of his historical details; the facility with which they are recalled; and the correctness and accuracy with which they are applied. With the various subjects immediately connected with politics, he has made himself well acquainted; and such is the strength of his memory, and the extent of his information, that the accuracy of his statements is never disputed. Mr. King, however, is somewhat of an enthusiast, and his feelings some-

times propel him to do that which his judgment cannot sanction. I am disposed to think, from a rapid survey of his political and parliamentary career, that the fury of party has sometimes betrayed him into the expression of sentiments, and the support and defence of measures, that were in their character not always accordant with his feelings; and that, whatever he may have been charged with, his intentions at least were pure, and his exertions, as he conceived, calculated for the public good. He was, indeed, *cried down* by some emigrants in this country, who have a considerable influence in the political transactions of the United States; and though unquestionably an ornament to the nation which has given him birth, his countrymen, averse to him from party considerations, joined in the cry, and he became a victim perhaps to the duty he owed and the love he bore his country. Prejudice, however, does not always continue; and the American people, with that good sense which forms so prominent a feature of their character, are beginning justly to appreciate those virtues and talents they once so much decried. Mr. King has a sound and discriminating mind, a memory uncommonly tenacious, and a judgment vigorous, prompt, and decisive. He either wants imagination, or is unwilling to employ a faculty that he conceives only calculated to delight and amuse. His object is more to convince and persuade by the force of reason, than to play upon the mind by the gaudy drapery of fancy. His style of eloquence is plain, but

bold and manly ; replete with argument, and full of intelligence ; neither impetuous nor vehement, but flowing and persuasive. His mind, like that of Fox, is *historical* ; it embraces consequences the most remote without difficulty, and effects the most distant with rapidity and ease. Facts always form the basis of his reasoning. Without these his analysis is defective, and his combinations and deductions often incorrect. His logic is not artificial, but natural ; he abandons its formal divisions, non-essentials, moods and figures, to weaker minds, and adheres to the substantials of natural reason. Of Mr. King's moral character I can say nothing from my own personal knowledge, as my acquaintance with him has not been long and intimate enough to enable me to judge correctly. I have not, however, heard any thing alleged against it calculated to lessen his reputation as an honorable statesman, or a virtuous member of society. He is wealthy, and has, no doubt, something of pride and hauteur in his manner offensive to the spirit of republicanism, and inconsistent with the idea of equality ; but as a father, husband, and friend, I have not yet heard him charged with any dereliction of duty, or any violation of those principles which tend to harmonize society and unite man to man by the bonds of affection and virtue.

Mr. King was appointed Minister to England a few years after the preceding sketch of his character was written : but indisposition and the infirmities of age induced him to relinquish this last honor

which the nation had bestowed upon him, and to return to his native land, where he soon after reposed with his fathers. To have been distinguished among the great men of his age was no small honor, but it is one which few, if any, will deny to the subject of these remarks. Of such men the nation must feel proud; and however party hatred may endeavor to distort, or political envy may strive to blacken and pollute their character or virtues while living, death, like the sun, dispels the clouds which have involved them, and draws them forth in their native beauty and splendor. There are few men who have played a distinguished part on the theatre of the world, that cannot say at the close of life :

Va dans l'ombre eternelle, ombre pleine d'envie
Et ne mele plus de censurer ma vie.

RICHARD RUSH.

Mr. Rush, late Secretary of the Treasury, is a gentleman of great suavity of manners and amiableness of disposition; polished, affable, and courteous to all, paying the same attention and manifesting the same respect to a subordinate, that he would to the highest officer of Government. He is about fifty years of age, of a delicate frame, but neat in his person. His countenance is mild, prepossessing, and strongly indicative of the gentle

and benevolent feelings of his heart. He is a man of fine taste and cultivated mind—perhaps more brilliant than solid—but not deficient in penetration and acuteness. He was educated for the bar, and practised the law for several years with success, which caused him to be selected to fill the first law office under the Government. He preceded Mr. Pinckney as Attorney General, was afterwards sent as Minister to England, and finally appointed Secretary of the Treasury under the administration of Mr. Adams. To that simplicity which should always characterise a republican, is added all the ease and urbanity of a gentleman accustomed to the most refined and polished society. Although, both at home and abroad, he has freely mingled in the most polished circles, he remains still the same, and has neither acquired additional grace, nor lost those traits of republicanism by which he has always been distinguished. He writes and speaks with great neatness, and sometimes elegance. His official papers or communications discover an intimate acquaintance with the subjects on which he treats, and are composed in a style of clearness and precision, indicating the power of his intellect, and the soundness and discrimination of his judgment.

Mr. Rush has filled every office to which he has been appointed with credit to himself and advantage to the nation. A philanthropist and a patriot, he has appropriated his talents and his time to the service of his country and the happiness of man; and, amidst the rancor and bitterness of party feel-

ing, he has, I believe, lost no personal friends among those who are hostile to his political opinions and principles. Mr. Rush is more eminent as a statesman than a lawyer. He has studied the various wants and conditions of society, the resources of his country, and the nature of mankind. The sphere of politics is better suited to the bent of his inclinations and the character of his mind, than the technical subtleties and ingenious sophistry of the bar. He prefers the condition in which he can contribute more extensively to the glory of his country and the happiness of his fellow-men, and where he may be less circumscribed in the operations of his philanthropy. Though he possesses the *suaviter in modo*, he is not wanting in energy, nor deficient in perseverance. If an object is to be accomplished, he is not retarded by difficulties, however formidable; and what he cannot attain by his eloquence, he sometimes effects by his industry and assiduity. Though placid, urbane, and benevolent, he is not deficient in bitterness of satire, and can use it to great effect, when the occasion requires its employment.

In Europe and America he is known and esteemed as an accomplished gentleman, and as a man of fine talents and eminent worth. He has retired, for a time, into private life, but not into obscurity. His country will again, ere long, solicit his services, and once more call into successful employment those powers which were intended for the benefit and happiness of mankind.

JOHN HOLMES.

Mr. Holmes is a Senator from Maine, and has been long known as a public speaker, and distinguished for his well established republican principles. He has served for several years in the councils of his country, and has manifested a firmness and independence at once indicative of energy of mind and correctness of judgment. He is peculiarly fitted for party conflicts, and displays, on all questions under discussion, a calm and untiring power of investigation, great intellectual resources, and a fund of information which enables him to enforce his arguments and to illustrate his subject with felicity and effect. His facts are generally so arranged and presented—are so full and satisfactory—that his opponent finds it difficult to answer them, or to weaken their force. And though not prepossessing in his appearance, though slow and deliberate in his enunciation, he seizes upon his hearers and forces them to follow him. There are too, occasionally, in Mr. Holmes a keenness of sarcasm, and a bitterness of invective, that are the more striking as they are the less expected. He is a sensible speaker, and does not labor after those bursts of eloquence, and those corruscations and flashes of imagination which are intended to draw forth involuntary acclamations of applause. He prepares no clap-traps—seeks not to play upon the feelings of his hearers—but addresses himself directly to the judgment; and is satisfied,

if he gains his object, without being very solicitous about the splendor or beauty of the medium through which it is reached. The liberality and independence of his mind induce him to act, on all occasions, in obedience to the dictates of his judgment and according to the principles of unchangeable truth. He reasons justly and feels correctly, and the nation owes much to his exertions.

PELEG SPRAGUE.

Mr. Sprague has not been many years in the councils of the nation. He is comparatively young; but he has enriched his mind with various knowledge, which he employs with great effect, when occasion requires it. He is well versed in the political history of the world; his classical attainments are respectable; and his general information extensive. He brings to subjects on which he intends to address the body of which he is a member, a mind fraught with intelligence, and prepared by previous study and reflection, to enlighten their obscurity and to dispel the mists of sophistry and delusion which surround them. Mr. S. indulges in no extravagant flights, in no affected or unnatural bursts of oratory. He thinks and feels profoundly, and expresses what he feels and thinks in a style chaste, vigorous, and flowing. He is a close and logical reasoner, and but seldom

permits himself to sport amid the enchantments of imagination, or to cull the flowers of fancy. His logic possesses all the precision of mathematical accuracy; his premises are so well laid down, and his deductions so conclusively drawn, that few can resist the conviction to which he leads the mind of the hearer. He never plays upon the outskirts of his subject, but encloses his ground, not with the "dazzling fence," but the substantial and indestructible wall of argument. His path is not indeed strewn with flowers, nor is the landscape distinguished for its splendor or magnificence, but the course is clear and unobstructed, and the force of truth lends its charm to the hearer, which, though it may not be so beautiful, is not less gratifying, than if it were decorated with all the ornaments of imagination. Mr. S. seldom indulges in declamation, and does not covet the reputation of being merely a fine speaker. His ambition is more elevated, and his object more laudable. He speaks because he conceives it to be his duty to enforce truth and to destroy error; he speaks from a desire to benefit his country, and not to acquire the fame of an eloquent debater. His views are expanded and liberal, and his mind is not less influenced by philanthropy than patriotism. He is a sagacious politician and an able advocate, always found on the side of the oppressed, and always ready to defend, and always eloquent in the support of the true interests of his country. In person, Mr. Sprague is above the middle size, thin, delicate, but well pro-

portioned. His eye is dark and intelligent ; his countenance open and ingenuous ; his voice full and sufficiently powerful ; and his action appropriate, and occasionally graceful.

DANIEL WEBSTER.

Of this distinguished orator, statesman, and lawyer, the American people have heard much. He has been long known at the bar and in the councils of the nation, as one in whom every American must feel a pride. Emerging from comparative obscurity, he has, like most of his countrymen who have acquired distinction, reached the "vantage ground" he now holds in the estimation of the people, by the almost unaided efforts of his own powerful mind—thus furnishing a splendid example of the success of industry and talent, in a nation where talent and industry, if properly directed, but seldom fail to lead to wealth and fame. There is something in the very exterior of Mr. Webster that is calculated to make a strong impression on the beholder : His head is peculiar, and would make an admirable study for the phrenologist. His features are regular, but there is something in his dark and deeply sunk eye, that indicates the gigantic grasp and vigorous energies of a powerful mind ; while his Shakspearian pile of forehead, his sallow complexion, strongly defined mouth,

dark raven hair, and heavy eye brows, present a head that no one can contemplate with a feeling of indifference. In person, he is about the middle size, rather broad across the shoulders, and not elegantly proportioned. His gait is slow and steady, and wants elasticity; and his dress is usually plain and in good taste. The prominent traits of his mind are acuteness, depth, fertility, and comprehensiveness; and those of his heart are, rectitude, liberality, a lofty feeling of independence, and a deep sense of what is honorable and just. He is not, however, exempt from the appearance of pride, blended with haughtiness, which operates, in some degree, as a barrier to his popularity, but which may originate rather from the abstraction of a mind intensely and frequently occupied on momentous subjects, than from any real feeling of contempt for his fellow men. Mr. Webster is admitted to be profound as a jurist and skilful as a politician. He has read much and thought deeply on all questions connected with his profession; and his mind is so constituted as to apply with great accuracy the principles of jurisprudence to the peculiar case submitted to his judgment. The power of his memory, and his habitual research, have made him familiar with the decisions of the highest tribunals of England and America; and though long in public life, and frequently called upon to take a prominent part in the discussion of the most important and interesting subjects of legislation, he has not omitted to pursue that course

of reading and investigation which is so essential to eminence at the bar. Nor while thus employed has he neglected to make himself intimately acquainted with the history of the legislation of his country, and the necessary operation of the policy of the government on its prosperity and happiness. With a mind thus gifted by nature, and enriched by study and reflection, it would be a matter of surprise, if he did not stand forth "proudly eminent" among his countrymen. Mr. Webster marshals his arguments with the skill of an experienced general, and pushes them forward in masses and solid columns till all resistance is vain, and the conquest is achieved ; or, like the hunter, he draws his net closer and closer, till the prey is completely enclosed. His mind seems to expand by the introduction of a new thought, like the successive circles of a lake, moved by a pebble. He supports his positions not only by the force of logical truth, but by all the aids which experience and historical facts can furnish, and the natural and moral world is ransacked for the most striking and apposite illustrations. His eloquence is characterised by vigor, simplicity, and power ; he seldom indulges in any extravagant bursts of oratory, or attempts any fine flourishes of rhetoric. On ordinary occasions his style is plain and simple, and scarcely rises above the common level of colloquial ease ; while at the same time he pours out masses of thought, that overwhelm by their force, if they do not dazzle by their brilliancy. In his extem-

poraneous efforts, and these are by far the most frequent, he does not seem desirous to make a display, or to figure merely as an orator, but moves steadily forward, piling argument upon argument, and heaping thought upon thought, *subjecto Pelio Ossam*, till he reaches the conclusion he has proposed, and has convinced, as he believes, the minds of those he is addressing. There is, I think, much more of judgment than imagination in Mr. Webster. He has been so long used to the exercise of the former, that he deems the employment of the latter unnecessary, if it ever existed to a sufficient extent to render it a useful auxiliary; and his memory, from the want of practice or of taste, though it may serve him in that particular vocation to which he has been called, sometimes fails him when he desires its aid to illustrate or embellish by a happy quotation from the poet, historian, or orator. His temperament is not poetical, nor is his mind imaginative. He throws out no pictures that can be admired for their beauty or magnificence; but there are occasional passages in his speeches, of splendid declamation, which will always be read or heard with admiration. Mr. Webster partakes more of Demosthenes than Cicero; and resembles Fox more than Sheridan. He has the vehemence and strength of the former, but wants the epigrammatic point and imagery of the latter. His mind is naturally logical, and has not been impaired by the sophistry of the bar. It analyses every subject presented to it, and if it be of such a nature as to

require great depth and research, the operations of his mind, it is said, are so intense and unre-mitted, that his complexion becomes darker and more bilious, and thus indicates the importance and magnitude of the question he is investigating. It is not often, however, that he is called upon thus to exercise his great powers. Occasionally in the Senate, but more frequently at the bar of the Supreme Court of the United States, he throws out his whole strength, and exhibits the full range, depth, clearness, and power, of his magnificent intellect. This was eminently the case in the great debate during the last session, on Mr. Foot's resolution. On that question Mr. W. gave one of the finest specimens of his eloquence—a specimen which has not been surpassed in any country, and which will be preserved and admired by succeeding ages as much as it can be by the present. Mr. Webster's style is plain but vigorous, occasionally rising to splendor, but usually unadorned. His voice is good, but wants variety of tone for brilliant effect; and his action is easy and appropriate.* Though he may not be a poet, he is nevertheless

*Ingenium cui sit, cui mens diviniior atque os
Magna soniturum.*

* A very correct and well-written sketch of Mr. W. has been recently given in a work lately published, and attributed to the pen of Mr. Knapp.

THEODORE FRELINGHUYSEN.

Mr. F. is between 40 and 50 years of age. His countenance, though grave, possesses much sweetness, is often lighted up with the smile of benevolence, and indicates great sensibility. The last was, it is believed, the second session he had served in the Senate of the United States, and though it was one in which the highest intellectual efforts were called into exertion, he did not fall behind the most gifted, in the conflict of mind which was then exhibited. Mr. F.'s views are patriotic, benevolent, and enlarged; animated by the spirit of philanthropy, and guided by the dictates of a sound judgment, he is always found on the side of the oppressed and persecuted; and always the advocate of the true interests of his country. Called out by the natural feelings of his heart, and impelled by a strong sense of duty, he entered into the discussion of one of the most important and interesting subjects of legislation which has for many years been submitted to the consideration of Congress, and displayed an acuteness of penetration, a depth of feeling, and a power of eloquence, which have elevated him to a high rank among the orators and statesmen of his country. The Indian question was one in which he felt a deep interest, and on which he brought to bear all the energies of a vigorous and cultivated mind. The subject was adapted to the nature of his eloquence,

and he did ample justice to it. There are in Mr. Frelinghuysen, a zeal and earnestness that give great effect to what he says, and a mellowness and plaintiveness in his tones which harmonize finely with the pathos of the subject on which his eloquence is employed. His voice has, perhaps, too much of uniformity in its intonations, but it falls agreeably upon the ear, is listened to with pleasure, and its effect would be wonderful, if it were modulated with more art, and made to suit the particular sentiment which the speaker feels. With the questions on which Mr. Frelinghuysen speaks, he previously makes himself well acquainted, and never comes unprepared to elucidate, amplify, and enforce, the various topics to be discussed. He thinks profoundly and justly on whatever he attempts to handle, and employs with great judgment the labors of others as well as his own, to develope and enlighten whatever may be dark, obscure, or intricate. But the most distinguished excellence of this gentleman is the exquisite moral and religious tone which he infuses into and which breathes through all he utters. Every one who listens admits its power, and feels that he is listening to one whose heart is deeply imbued with religious purity and truth. Mr. F. does not often employ his imagination. His mind is more logical than poetical; he prefers reasoning to embellishment; and endeavors to convince rather than delight. His style is chaste, and occasionally oratorical; and his action easy and appropriate. The

correctness of his views, the soundness of his judgment, and the sincerity of his heart, give to all he says such impressiveness and effect, that he never rises at his seat that he does not claim the undivided attention of the body of which he is a member. In short, his talents and virtues render him an honor to his State and an ornament to his country.

JOHN M. CLAYTON.

Mr. C. is about forty years of age. His form is above the middle size, robust, but not very muscular. His features are regular; his eye dark, but soft; his complexion uncommonly fair; and his hair just beginning to be sprinkled with the snows of age. Like Mr. Barton, he made his splendid *debut* in the Senate during the last session of Congress, and electrified the grave body of which he is a member, by the power of his eloquence. He might have been, as he no doubt was, distinguished in his native State, but he was still "unknown to fame" in the political world, and therefore his magnificent effort excited the more admiration as it was the less expected. His speech on Mr. Foot's resolution may be ranked next to Mr. Webster's on that question. In chastity of diction, classical purity of style, felicity and elegance of thought, and beauty of composition, it has been seldom surpass-

ed by the parliamentary orators of our country. Mr. Clayton is not less conspicuous for judgment than imagination. He not only reasons with great logical power, but gives to his reasoning the charms of ornament, and arrays his conceptions in language sometimes figurative, and almost always beautiful. His style possesses a polish, ease, and gracefulness, which render it not only pleasing to the ear, but agreeable in the closet. It is graceful without being elaborate, and polished without being *recherche*. As an illustration, I give the following beautiful passage from the speech to which I have referred :

“ It has been said, and I believe truly, that we can never fall without a struggle ; but in the contest with such a man, thus furnished by ourselves with ‘ all the appliances and means to boot ’ against us, we must finally sink. For a time our valleys will echo with the roar of artillery, and our mountains will ring with the reports of the rifle. The storm of civil war will howl fearfully through the land, from the Atlantic border to the wildest recesses of the West, covering with desolation every field which has been crowned with verdure by the culture of freemen, and now resounding with the echoes of our happiness and industry. But the tempest must subside and be succeeded by the deep calm and sullen gloom of despotism—after which the voice of a freeman shall never again be heard within our borders, unless in the fearful and suppressed whispers of the traveller from some

distant land, who shall visit the scene of our destruction to gaze in sorrow on the melancholy ruin."

Mr. Clayton's reasoning is distinguished for its *lucidus ordo* ; his arguments are consecutive, and arranged with great clearness. He deals but little in sophistry, never attempts the epigrammatic, and is more anxious to produce conviction than to excite admiration. In the most extensive range of investigation, he never loses sight of the goal he has in view, and never suffers the warmth of his imagination or the ardor of his feelings to lead him from the point at which he aims. When he draws upon his imagination or his memory, it is only to gild the shaft, to give it more splendor and effect. His urbanity and courtesy in debate, even amidst the intemperance of party warfare, are striking and uniform. He never allows himself to be thrown off his poise, or to descend to incivility or rudeness, however strong the temptation, and always exhibits the deportment and feelings of a gentleman, whatever may be the provocation or the excitement. To a commanding person, he unites an agreeable voice, and an appropriate gesticulation ; though the one is not sufficiently varied, nor the other regulated by art. Indeed, Mr. C. is a man of whom any country might well be proud, and from whom his own cannot long withhold the honors due to his distinguished merit.

JOHN RANDOLPH.

Mr. Randolph has been long in the councils of his country, and long distinguished as an orator. He commenced his parliamentary career at an early age, and soon displayed those talents and that peculiar species of eloquence which have thrown around his name so much brilliancy. His mind appears to have been precocious, and to have attained maturity too soon to warrant great expectations of permanent excellence and usefulness. He was for upwards of thirty years a member of the House of Representatives, and for some time one of the most brilliant and popular orators it contained. But either from disappointed ambition, or the peculiar bent and eccentricity of his mind, he unfortunately, if not imprudently, aberrated too soon from the course which would have insured continued fame, as well as promotion under our government. Like Alexander the Great, he sighed for more conquests, and endeavored to raise up a new party, which failed, and he sunk under the ruins he had himself created. Mr. R. was never, however, distinguished for great power and force of reasoning, and in close and accurate analysis was almost always defective. The feebleness of his health, and the frailties of his body, have contributed to affect his temper, and to render him somewhat ascefic and petulant. His invective is terrible, and his sarcasm keen and overwhelming. Full of caprice and eccentricities, you know not

when, or against whom, his deadly shaft is to be levelled, and the hearer is sometimes surprised to find the flaming sword severing the bones and marrow of friend as well as foe. His style is chaste and polished—his language always the most select and appropriate, and his images, figures, and quotations, are big with meaning, and their application striking and felicitous. His pronunciation is founded upon that of the best models of England, and remarkable for its correctness. He is never at a loss for a word, and the word he selects is always the one which should have been chosen, and no other. His declamation is sometimes splendid, and always elegant.

Mr. Randolph's reading is extensive, his taste classical, and his knowledge of history, especially British history, profound, minute, and accurate. He often makes the most apt and happy quotations, and exhibits analogies which, perhaps, no one else would have thought of; but which he renders striking, and forcible. His associations are, however, slight, and he thus becomes occasionally excursive and exceedingly erratic; but in the midst of his wildest aberrations, he scatters around him flowers so beautiful, that very few are offended at his devious wanderings, and follow him with pleasure wherever he chooses to lead them. He never loses a good thought, or a fine image, that may occur to him either in conversation or solitude, "but treasures it up in the volume of his brain," till it may be wanted, and he never fails to

let it out when he has an opportunity. His invective, like the deadly siroc, withers every thing it sweeps across, and his opponent is sure to quail and shiver beneath its touch. His sarcasms are barbed with the most deadly acrimony, and the bitterness of his feelings indicates a ferocious and misanthropic character. He indulges more in satire than logic, more in invective than reasoning ; but there is a fascination about him, as an orator, that few can or are willing to resist. His very silence is sometimes speaking and eloquent, and the bare motion of his finger or his head often conveys as much meaning as the most finished or elaborate sentence. But between his delivered and published speeches, there is a vast difference. In the latter, you lose that charm by which you are bound when you listen to what he utters : the attitude, gesticulation, emphasis, *action*, are gone. The skeleton is left, but the spirit has fled ; the body is there, but the soul is no more. To judge of Mr. R. as an orator, you must hear him, or rather you must *have heard* him, when his mind was in the plenitude of its power, and his imagination luxuriating in the delicious images of youth and poetry. Burke seems to be his model, and Shakspeare his constant companion. From both he draws largely, and with the latter he is as familiar as Alexander was with the works of the immortal Homer. But Mr. R.'s mind and habits are wholly averse from the necessary routine and details of business. The mere labors of legislation

are not suited to his temper or intellect, and both as a member of a committee and the House, he is almost wholly inefficient.

Mr. R. is tall, meagre, and badly formed. His eye is black and piercing; his complexion sallow and cadaverous; his hair smoothed down on his head, and tied in a cue; and his voice, though of no great compass, is uncommonly clear and distinct. He is remarkable for his eccentricity, and eccentricity has been justly denominated a species of derangement. He has recently been appointed Minister to Russia, but what figure he will make in this new character, or what benefits he will render to the nation, time will soon determine. It has been considered by those who know Mr. R. as a rather extraordinary appointment, and one not at all calculated to add to his own fame or the reputation of his country.

LITTLETON W. TAZEWELL.

Mr. Tazewell held for many years the first rank at the bar of his native State. He is an able lawyer, and well versed in all the learning connected with his profession. His mind has been disciplined at the bar, and possesses all the subtilty, acuteness, and sophistry, which the legal profession is too apt to produce. By this habit of subtilizing, Mr. T. has, I think, impaired the power of intel-

lectual discrimination. Of him it may be emphatically said, that he can "make the worse appear the better cause;" and this power he exercises with so much force, ingenuity, and skill, that it requires no little reflection, and some analysis, to detect the sophistry he has employed, or the errors of logic into which he has fallen. It is a pity so fine a mind should have been injured by a practice so little suited to invigorate the judgment, whatever may be its tendency to sharpen the faculties. The habitual practice of indiscriminately defending the right and wrong, may brighten, but does not strengthen the mind, because the invention, and not the judgment, is most generally employed; and though fertility may be the result, it is not always accompanied by correctness of deduction or accuracy of decision. Had Mr. Tazewell been trained in the school of legislation, instead of law, he would unquestionably have been one of the brightest luminaries this country has produced. He possesses an intuitive quickness of perception and comprehensiveness of intellect, that would have given him, in the opinion of his countrymen, as elevated a standing as a legislator and statesman, as he now holds as a civilian and advocate. But having belonged to a party that has not been held in high estimation in his native State, it was his destiny to be excluded, till recently, from the councils of the nation, and he has been obliged to revolve in a sphere of usefulness much more contracted and less suited to the exer-

cise of the native powers of his mind. As an orator, Mr. T.'s diction is plain, but vigorous; his elocution flowing and easy; his voice full-toned and finely modulated, and his action appropriate and good. He is tall and stately in his person, and his countenance is strongly marked, and indicative of the workings of passion. He is altogether a remarkable man, and perhaps a fair exemplification of the Virginian character. He is high-minded and honorable, blending a feeling of aristocracy with that of republicanism; magnificent in his notions, yet simple in his habits; passionately attached to his native State, yet loving the other citizens of his country; clanish, yet liberal; refining, yet practical; seeking fame, yet not neglecting wealth; proud, but not oppressive; haughty, but not overbearing. He is now upwards of sixty years of age, and has reached the zenith of his fame. Time has silvered his locks, and age has wrinkled his brow, but his voice and his motion still denote a healthy body and a vigorous constitution. As a legislator, he has left no record of his wisdom, and no monument which will transmit his name to posterity.

ROBERT Y. HAYNE.

This gentleman is from the South, and belongs to the Jackson party. He is about forty years of age; his countenance is prepossessing and

agreeable, and his form compact and well proportioned. He has been a Senator for some years, and is as distinguished for his urbanity as his talents. His temper is warm, and his feelings ardent and generous. He is an orator of no common excellence. His mind is fruitful and affluent; his imagination vigorous, and his judgment correct. He reasons with a good deal of power, and wields the weapons of logic with much skill and effect. The polish and elegance which distinguish him, are always calculated to please; and while wrestling with his opponent, he displays so much courteousness, that all asperity is lost, and nothing like bitterness or mortification is felt. He casts upon the subject he is discussing, the light of a luminous mind, and concentrates and varies and sports with its rays so elegantly, that the listener cannot but be delighted with the charm he wields. He has, however, embarked in a career that is not likely to conduct him to greatness, and the notions and opinions which he and the school of politicians to which he belongs, entertain, are not those which will harmonize with the convictions and sentiments of the great majority of his countrymen. But whatever may be his errors of opinion, or the warmth and obstinacy with which he supports them, no one can deny him knowledge, eloquence, and genius. He stands deservedly at the head of his party in the Senate, and was the only opponent during the last session, the giant of the North deigned to enter the arena to contend with.

JOHN FORSYTH.*

Mr. Forsyth is a young man, of handsome person and agreeable manners; he seems to be about thirty-five years of age; his countenance possesses a great deal of sweetness and benignity, is very prepossessing and very regular. He has, like most of the members of the American Congress, been educated for the bar, at which he has practised for some years, with considerable success. He received his education in the seminary of which Mr. Crawford was usher; and first distinguished himself in a case of impeachment instituted by the Legislature of Georgia against the Commissioners employed to dispose of some public lands belonging to that State. On this occasion, though but a stripling, he displayed much ability, and acquired no little reputation. It was the means of making him known through his native State, and of bringing him into public life as a member of the great national council. The practice of the law has, therefore, for the present, been relinquished, either from necessity or inclination. Legislation, however, seems to be better adapted to his habits and feelings, and it is scarcely probable he will ever return to his profession, if he should be so fortunate as to succeed in the difficult and arduous duties of a politician and statesman, in which he is now engaged. I think Mr. Forsyth has some

* This sketch was written in 1817, and published in the "Letters from Washington."

ambition, and is solicitous to render himself conspicuous in political life. His talents are by no means of an ordinary character, and were he to devote more of his time to the improvement of his mind, and the acquisition of that various and general knowledge so essential to a statesman, he would have but few superiors in this country. I think him a fine and sometimes an eloquent speaker; his voice is harmonious, and susceptible of great modulation, but not sonorous or powerful. He wants impetuosity and vehemence, but supplies this deficiency by a constant, regular, and uninterrupted flow, which resembles a stream where no rocks arise or projections intervene to disturb the gentle motion of its current. His style is not figurative or ornamented, but sufficiently flowing and oratorical to gratify the ear and please the mind. I believe Quinctilian and Longinus have asserted, that revolutions and republics always produced great orators. This is unquestionably true; but the speakers of this country do not seem to cultivate oratory as an art, and its artificial embellishments and elegancies are therefore somewhat neglected. Habit has given the public speakers and declaimers of this country a facility of speech and a rapidity and ease of elocution, with which they seem to rest satisfied, and make no farther effort to attain the sublimity and elevation of true eloquence. Mr. Forsyth is more of a debater than an orator; his elocution flows, but never gushes; his phraseology is not tastefully se-

lected or artfully arranged ; his deductions are not always conclusive, nor his sophistry ingenious ; he wants the “dazzling fence of argument,” the epigrammatic point, and the graceful antithesis, which may be noticed in Grattan and the Irish orators ; but still Mr. Forsyth is capable of excellence, and has received from nature those powers which, with proper polish and cultivation, would conduct him to a niche in the temple of immortality.

Mr. Forsyth has continued ever since the above was written, in public life. He was, soon after its appearance, made Senator of the United States ; then Minister to Spain ; afterwards Governor of his native State ; and is again a Senator from Georgia. He is devoted to party, and ambitious of high station and political eminence. But he has yet to learn that each is but

A proud mendicant, it boasts and begs :
It begs an alms of homage from the throng,
And oft the throng denies its charity.

SHAKSPEARE.

Popular favor is but a transient bauble, and every politician will experience its emptiness. He who prostitutes talent, or sacrifices private friendship at the shrine of ambition, may live to repent his folly in bitterness of spirit, and learn too late that he has followed a shadow and left the substance behind, and that his idol has been a glittering meteor, radiant and glorious to the vision, but hollow and worthless to the touch.

EDWARD LIVINGSTON.

Mr. Livingston, though now upwards of seventy years of age, still retains the powers of mind which distinguished him in the maturity of life. He is tall, thin, and but little bent by age. His step is still firm and elastic, and nothing seems to have failed him but his vision, the deficiency of which is supplied by a lens suspended from his neck, which he uses instead of spectacles. Mr. L. has been long known as a lawyer and civilian of the first rank. The famous *batture* question, in which he was opposed by the illustrious Jefferson, gave him a notoriety which his subsequent conduct has not tended to diminish. His Louisiana Code, the result of profound knowledge and laborious investigation, has been adopted in all the courts of that State; and his researches in this branch of science, and his labors in codification, like those of Jeremy Bentham, have been profound and indefatigable. He has been recently, it is believed, engaged in preparing a criminal code for the District of Columbia, which is certainly much wanted, and which Congress will no doubt adopt as a substitute for the wretched system of criminal jurisprudence which now prevails in this District. Mr. Livingston is a gentleman of extensive reading and great attainments. He is acquainted with the ancient and most of the modern languages, which has opened to him the treasures those languages contain. As a legislator and lawyer, he stands deservedly high.

Though a septuagenarian, his mind is still acute, subtle, and discriminating, and no evidence as yet appears of a decay of intellectual power. His speeches are elaborate, *recherche*, and ingenious, often indeed as much intended to convince himself as his hearers, and perhaps bordering too closely on the sophistry of the bar. His written are, however, better than his oral speeches; for in the former he endeavors to polish the style and elaborate the argument, to meet the public eye and to sustain his reputation, while in the latter he seems to be more careless and indifferent. Mr. L. is not very fluent; he pauses and hesitates too frequently, and his enunciation, from the loss of his teeth, is somewhat indistinct, and his voice too low. He is listened to more for the matter than the manner, which is nevertheless not disagreeable. He evinces a liberality and fairness in the discussion of a subject, which are always felt and appreciated, and which render him at all times an honorable opponent. Mr. Livingston's mind has not been exclusively applied to political and legal subjects; it has been occasionally refreshed at the Pierian fount, and enriched by the treasures of literature. He does not, like Brougham, relax his faculties by demonstrating a mathematical proposition, but by dipping into the scenes of Shakspeare, Alfieri, or Voltaire. He has not yet outlived his reputation, though it is somewhat diminished, and has sunk from the "high and palmy state" it had once attained. Age has impaired the vigor of his imagi-

nation, but has not damped the native ardor of his feelings. Though he has outlived the phantasies of life, its vapid realities do not seem to have lessened his attachment to the world. Perhaps the experience of seventy years may now induce him to feel, in the language of Petrarch,

“Che quanto piace al mondo e breve sogno.”

If it do not, the conflicts of party rancor, the vicissitudes of fortune, and the sickening vanities of the world, have been experienced in vain, and life has not been to him a school of wisdom, but a scene of successive and uninterrupted enjoyments, not “stale, dull, and unprofitable,” but redolent of joy, radiant with hope, and teeming with pleasure.

JOSIAH S. JOHNSTON.

Mr. Johnston has been in Congress for several years, and a member of both branches of the National Legislature. He is not less conspicuous as a legislator than as a gentleman. He has all the intelligence necessary to constitute the one, and all the propriety of action and the urbanity and courtesy of manners which form the other. As a statesman, his views are liberal and just, always supporting those principles which he conceives to be the best calculated to promote the great interests of his country, and always ready to defend the cause of truth and humanity. Though his course

while in public life has not been marked by its splendor, it may be traced by its usefulness. It is not his ambition to figure as a politician, or to attain high political rank. He esteems it the highest honor to be the representative of a free people, and to discharge the duties of his station in such a manner as to merit their approbation, while he retains his own; and he covets neither place nor power. His talents and information have been so justly appreciated that he has generally been placed on the most important committees, to which he is always deemed a valuable accession. His mind possesses considerable acumen, and does not want depth or comprehensiveness. His expositions are clear and satisfactory, and he sometimes concentrates his rays of light so strongly, that the obscurest parts of what he is handling become luminous. As a speaker, he wants fluency, but possesses force; and as a politician, his conduct is fair and honorable.

DAVID BARTON.

This gentleman is short of stature, but erect and well proportioned. His gait, like his enunciation, is slow and sedate, and his countenance is grave, with a spice of satire running through its lineaments. His eye is gray and expressive, and his mouth peculiarly prim and eloquent. Till the last session of Congress, his talents were not fully known or appreciated. He occasionally made a

speech which was admired for its power and intelligence, but his retiring manners and melancholy mood seldom allowed him to make a display of those talents with which he is gifted. He seemed to seek no distinction, and pursued the "even tenor of his way" almost unnoticed and unknown, till the peculiar nature of the great question introduced into the Senate by Mr. Foot called him out, and gave him an opportunity to exhibit those powers with which he is endowed. There was something original in the manner in which he handled the subject under discussion; and all were surprised at the keenness of his invective and the pungency of his satire, because they were unexpected, though not uncalled for or undeserved. From the general gravity of his manner, no one anticipated such a display, and all were struck with the peculiar severity and novelty he exhibited. Some of his subsequent efforts, during the same session, were more argumentative and less caustic, but they still evinced a deep feeling of indignation against the acts of the administration. Mr. Barton's mode of warfare is like that of the Indian—he first scalps and then tomahawks his adversary. His allusions, though somewhat mystical, are nevertheless striking, and often felicitous, and his figures are purposely suited to the taste of the West, in which he has spent the most of his life. His bitterness originates as much from his hypochondriacal temperament, as from his contempt of folly and his disgust at profligacy. Convinced of the purity of his motives and the correct-

ness of his views, he is bold, independent, and fearless, and marches up to the point of his enemy's sword, without blanching at its aspect, and with a determination neither to give nor receive quarters. There is another peculiarity in the character of Mr. Barton, which should not be omitted. With almost repulsive gravity, his "heart is open as day to melting charity," and he bestows with princely munificence where the object is worthy of his benevolence, and sometimes, indeed, without inquiring whether it be so or not. The *soubrequet* which has been given him, is one which, from its appropriateness, will remain attached to him thro' life. "The Little Red" is one of those individuals who are destined to figure in the world, and who deserve the distinction they acquire.

I shall now proceed to give a few brief sketches of the distinguished Members of the House of Representatives, which, though it has not of late been so fruitful in talent and eloquence as it once was, still contains many who rank high in the scale of intellectual power and acquirement. These I shall arrange, as I have done those of the Senators, according to States, beginning with Massachusetts.

EDWARD EVERETT.

Mr. Everett has been but a few years a representative in Congress, and is still but a young man. His parliamentary career has been, so far, as brilliant as his friends could have expected, or as he could himself desire. He was preceded by a high literary reputation, and his *debut* on the floor of the House did not tend to lessen it. There was something splendid and classical in his first speech, which excited great attention, and produced pleasure in those who heard him. Mr. Everett is more of an orator than a debater. He has practised in the professor's chair, and in the pulpit, till his elocution has become easy and captivating. On oratory, as an art, he has bestowed much of his attention and labor; and when the subject suits the peculiar character of his mind, or the nature of his feelings, his declamation is splendid. He throws into his voice a pathos and beauty of intonation, that render it exceedingly agreeable. Its dulcet and mellow cadences,

“Musical as is Apollo's lute,”

fall delightfully upon the ear, and when employed in giving expression to a fine sentiment, a lofty conception, or a generous and noble feeling, they resemble poetry blended with music, and act upon the mind with a charm that no one feels a wish to resist. His attitudes, though studied, are easy and graceful, while the fire of his fine hazel eye, and

the expression of his grave but intellectual countenance, give the most powerful effect to all he utters. When Mr. Everett becomes heated with the subject, and stimulated by the gaze of those around him, his declamation is magnificent, and his eloquence is poured out with so much power, and with such propriety and gracefulness of manner, that every hearer is delighted, and feels that he is addressed by one of no ordinary genius. The style of his eloquence, and the peculiar plaintiveness of his voice, are finely adapted to subjects susceptible of pathos. Though these are, perhaps, better suited to the pulpit than the Senate, they are nevertheless attractive everywhere, and give a charm to the tone of moral reflection and sentiment in which he occasionally indulges, that every one must feel. From his habit of declaiming in the pulpit, he is perhaps somewhat too didactic in his manner, for the sphere which he now occupies; but there is a classical purity and beauty in his style and allusions, and a lucidness in his arrangement, that must give pleasure to every cultivated mind. Mr. E. is a ripe scholar: he has the reputation of being inferior in this respect to none in this country, and his general reading has been extensive and well digested. He possesses a cultivated taste, a chastened though not very vigorous imagination, and a judgment at all times accurate and discriminating. As a logician, there are some of his coadjutors in legislation who surpass him in force and ingenuity, but not in clearness and truth

of moral deduction, or accuracy of reasoning. The bar has given to some of his associates greater readiness and facility in wielding the weapons of logic, but they have less range of argument, and less beauty of illustration. I have said that Mr. E. is less of a debater than an orator, because his inclinations and pursuits having been more literary than political, he is not at all times ready to meet his opponent, and but seldom addresses the House until he is fully prepared by previous research and reflection, and then only when questions of deep interest and importance are brought up for discussion. On minor questions he will not often descend to speak, and he has not that temper which would lead him to deal in invective and bitter sarcasm. He treats his opponent with great mildness and candor, and reasons with the coolness of a philosopher, though he sometimes gives vent to indignant feelings, and on those occasions his bursts of oratory are truly splendid. He is far from giving "to party, what is due to mankind;" its bickerings, intemperance, and animosities, do not disturb the equanimity of his mind, and he meets his political adversary in fair and honorable combat, and never suffers himself to be thrown from his course by violence, indecorum, or want of courtesy. It has been said of Mr. Everett, with great propriety, as it was said of Goldsmith, "*Nihil tetigit quod non ornavit.*" He handles no subject that he does not ornament from the natural and acquired elegance of his mind. His regular ora-

tions, parliamentary speeches, and his literary essays, all breathe a spirit of philanthropy, a justness of thought, a depth of feeling, and a tone of moral beauty, which every impartial mind must admire. There is however observable in some of his intellectual efforts, a want of richness of coloring, which would indicate that in the cultivation of his judgment he had too much neglected the exercise of his imagination. It is not so often employed as it might be with effect, to give richness and splendor to his composition, whether prepared in the closet or delivered on the rostrum. American orators are usually, I think, too dry and didactic ; they confine themselves rather too strictly to mere argumentation, and will but rarely suffer themselves to sport amid the brilliant coruscations of wit, or to use a faculty which, under the guidance of a cultivated taste, is so well suited to give magnificence and beauty to the productions of the mind.

Mr. Everett, though long devoted to the refined and elegant pleasures of literature, to

“ Calm contemplation and poetic ease,”

is nevertheless a man of business, and is among the most punctual, regular, and assiduous, in the discharge of his parliamentary duties. He is never absent from the House, or from a meeting of a committee to which he may belong, unless detained by sickness, and is always prompt in bringing the business referred to him before the body of which he is a member, for its action. Mr. Everett

is ambitious of political distinction, which, I doubt not, he will attain, from the character of his mind, his industry, and the extent and variety of his attainments. His patriotism is ardent and his assiduity unceasing. In the pulpit, the editorial and professor's chair, on the rostrum and the floor of Congress, he has been equally conspicuous and equally successful. As a reviewer, he has given reputation to the literary character of his country, and as an orator, he is held in high and merited estimation. His style of speaking and writing is neat, flowing, and oratorical, and his speeches are always listened to and read with edification and pleasure. Mr. E. is indeed one in whom, from the extent of his acquirements, the superiority of his intellect, and his devotion to the cause of truth, of letters, and his country, the nation must feel a just and honorable pride.

JOHN DAVIS.

Mr. Davis is a native of Massachusetts, and has been a member of the House of Representatives for about six years. He does not often address the body to which he belongs ; but when he does, it is with great ability and effect. He is sedate, grave, and circumspect, reflecting intensely on the subject brought up for discussion, and speaking only when it is of such a nature as to require the lights and energies of superior minds. On such occa-

sions he investigates profoundly, prepares himself with facts to illustrate and develope, and comes forth as a most eloquent and powerful advocate. His mind is capable of constant laborious and intense application ; is clear, acute, and vigorous ; not easily swayed by ingenuity, or led astray by feeling ; seeking truth, through all the meanders of subtlety, and drawing her into light, and presenting her in all her native and undisguised loveliness. Like the well trained hunter, he is never driven from the pursuit of the game by false scents, but perseveres, whatever may be the irregularity of the course or the obstructions of the way, till he brings out the truth, and exposes the fallacies of those who have endeavored to conceal it. His information on the great questions of national policy is extensive and accurate, and his reasoning solid and irresistible. His positions are laid down broadly, and demonstrated with clearness. He never loiters on the outskirts of his subject, or strives to amuse his hearers by pretty conceits or idle verbiage. He deals in demonstration, and when he brings his proposition to a close, it is like the *quod erat demonstrandum* of the mathematician. Almost every mind is satisfied, or finds it difficult, if not impossible, to extract the wedge he has driven in. His speeches are fine specimens of practical logic and accurate reasoning, close, clear, and conclusive. Mr. D. does not deal much in theory ; he is more practical than speculative, and bends his whole powers to produce conviction,

without aiming at beauty or splendor of diction in what he says. His thoughts are "apples of gold," but not "in a net-work of silver." His style is plain and unostentatious, and suited to the weight and gravity of the subject which he discusses, and though correct, is not very flowing or ornamented. His frame is large, and apparently muscular; his countenance grave, and marked by the traces of thought, and exhibits great shrewdness and penetration. As a legislator, he is vigilant and active, always at his post, and always prepared to support or resist, by his eloquence or vote, any measure which may be introduced into the House that he conceives to be conducive or injurious to the interests of the nation.

TRISTAM BURGESS.

Mr. Burgess is about sixty years of age. His countenance yet retains the traces of former beauty; his complexion is still fair, and his eye still animated with fire; age has silvered his locks and bent his frame, but has not diminished the native energies of his mind, or cooled the ardor of his feelings. His imagination is still glowing, and still wantons in the luxuriance of its own creations. Domestic calamities, and the infirmities of age, have mitigated but not diminished the warmth of his temperament, or lessened the activity of his mind.

There is, indeed, something youthful and elastic and glowing in its operations, a beautiful blending of the luxuriant verdure of spring with the rich maturity and abundance of autumn. The "sear and yellow leaf" is enclosed in a wreath of roses, and the maxims of age are decorated with the flowers of poetry. Mr. B. is a man of wealth; he has been, it is said, a professor of elocution in one of the northern colleges, and is in some degree his own teacher. Like all self-taught men, he has read much and reflected more. The information he possesses has been carefully passed through the crucible of his mind, and can be called out whenever it is required. His recollection enables him to call up whatever may be treasured in his memory, and he can always give to his facts "a local habitation and a name." Mr. Burges is among the few legislators of our country who have not made law a profession. The Congress of the United States contains a large majority of this class of men. The legal profession supplies the most abundant and best materiel of both Houses. The practice of the law, however, is not, I think, exactly suited to the character of a legislator or a statesman. The bar and the Senate require different qualifications and different powers. To be eminent at the bar, a strong memory, some subtilty, a good deal of sophistry, and a knowledge of jurisprudence, are generally all that are required; but to be distinguished in the chair of state, or the hall of legislation, a mind of greater range and comprehensiveness—a

more cultivated intellect, and a deeper knowledge of human action and human motives are necessary : hence it often occurs that those who have become eminent at the bar, are far from being the most prominent, or the most useful, in the halls of Congress. It is a new arena to which their previous studies and pursuits have rendered them, in some degree, strangers; and they find it is not enough, from a feeling of vanity, or a principle of opposition, to make the "worse appear the better cause." They must act on a wider field, and operate on a more extended range of materials. "The quirks, and quiddities," the sophistry and technicalities of the law, are of little avail in a field so extended and variegated, as that which a legislative assembly presents. The study of jurisprudence as a science, or as a branch of liberal education, is unquestionably a useful ingredient in the formation of a legislator ; but the long and continued practice of the law has a tendency, I conceive, to contract the mind to the mere exercise of technical subtilties, or to limit it to the production of ingenious, though, perhaps, splendid sophisms. The history of the world will prove that the most eminent legislators and statesmen have not been those who have devoted much of their time to the practice of the law. Solon, Lycurgus, and Numa, of ancient, and Pitt, Burke, and Fox, of modern times, were not lawyers, and, most likely, if they had been, would not have reached the glorious eminence they attained. The most distinguished

statesmen of this country were not those who were taken from the bar. Washington, Jefferson, and Madison (though the two latter had studied the law,) were not professional lawyers. Their minds had not been narrowed down by a habitual intermingling of right and wrong, or warped by a constrained and constant perversion of moral truths. It is not always a fact that this profession expands the intellect, and produces habits of reflection, though the mind is indeed constantly employed ; but it is not in the developement of hidden, or in the pursuit of obvious truths ; on the contrary, it is often employed to darken, or pervert them ; and the profession has, at best, no greater power than what the investigation of mathematical or abstract metaphysical subjects will afford.

“The law, says Burke, is not apt, except in persons happily born, to open and liberalize the mind in exactly the same proportion as the other sciences.” A mind disciplined at the bar, instead of being strengthened, is apt to lose its energies, and the habit of incessantly seeking for arguments on either side, tends to weaken its powers of discrimination. Lawyers are, however, eminently useful in legislative assemblies. They are, from the nature of their profession, well skilled in the phraseology, mechanism, and interpretation of law ; and can, therefore, give them that finish, efficiency and operation, they ought to have. It has, indeed, sometimes occurred, that statesmen of a high order have

been taken from the bar, but they have been men of genius, whose inclinations have led them, and whose reflections have been early directed, to those great and interesting subjects, which concern the well being of society, and the prosperity and happiness of nations. Their minds have early taken a political direction, and have not been weakened or degraded by exercising them in the indiscriminate and constant support of the right and the wrong. One of the principal evils resulting from this predilection for jurisprudence as a profession in this, as it will be perhaps in all republics, is too great a fondness for speaking. The habit of extemporaneous oratory acquired at the bar, and the reputation it produces, lead to the too frequent exercise of the power of speech, which tends to lessen the standing of those who yield to it, and to consume the time of the body they address. Extemporaneous oratory, in which most of the legal gentlemen of this country excel, is unquestionably a most invaluable talent, and when exercised with proper moderation, might be employed profitably to its possessor, and advantageously to the nation. But nothing can be more puerile and annoying, than a mere logocracy, where speeches continue to be poured out, long after the subject of discussion has ceased to interest, or to be susceptible of new or additional illustration. The nature of our government, will, however, always produce this evil, which belongs to, and is inherent in, every representative democracy. Members will often, either from vanity, a love of

distinction, or a solicitude to please their constituents, be induced to speak longer and more frequently than they would be disposed to do, under a different order of things ; and though they feel, and acknowledge the evil of it, they perceive it is one that it would be worse than vain to attempt to destroy, while the motives and causes I have mentioned continue to operate.

But to return from this digression. Mr. Burges always throws into the subject which he discusses, the spirit and enthusiasm by which he is fired, and whatever may be its abstract nature, he gives it variety by a judicious exercise of the imagination, as well as the judgment. He does not confine himself to mere logic alone, but avails himself of the aids of its kindred art, rhetoric, and the beauties of elocution, employing a style figurative and ornate, and decorating his subject with the pictures of the poet, while he elucidates and enforces it by the lights of history and the book of experience. His manner is too warm and vehement for his years, but it is not offensive or displeasing, and the hearer listens till he catches his enthusiasm and regards his vehemence as appropriate. Mr. B. is fond of declamation, and indulges occasionally in satire, which is keen, but genteel. There is nothing in it of roughness or vulgarity ; it is the Damascus blade, and not the scalping knife, and though it cuts with great keenness, the wound is not rankling. Mr. B. commenced his parliamentary career perhaps too late in life to be-

come an active or efficient debater, and prefers the character of an orator, for which his genius, temperament, and acquirements, better fit him, and at which he aims in most of his oratorical efforts. His political views are expansive and enlightened, and party prejudice is seldom suffered to lead him into error, or to darken the native clearness of his judgment. His moral is, I believe, equal to his intellectual character, and his eloquence has, therefore, all the charms of moral beauty, as well as the force of intellectual excellence. In short, there are few men of Mr. B.'s age in this country better fitted to adorn the circles of domestic life, or to give splendor to the sphere of political action. The vanities of the world have lost their hold upon him, but he still feels the stimulus of ambition, "the last infirmity of noble minds." It is not, however, the ambition which leads to the attainment of rank or place, but that which conducts to intellectual and moral eminence. This he has reached, and this forms the *ultima thule*, the last boundary of his earthly wishes and expectations.

HENRY R. STORRS.

Mr. Storrs is a member of the House of Representatives, and has been a Representative from New York for several years. In his person, he is above the middle size, well-formed, but rather

“fat than bard beseems.” His face is full and fleshy; his eye small, and defective in vision; which renders it necessary for him to use spectacles. He is, I believe, a native of Connecticut, between forty and fifty years of age, and has resided in New York for many years. As a debater, he has but few equals, and his eloquence, when he is in the humor to employ it, and the subject is of sufficient importance to call it forth, is almost irresistible. His elocution is easy, and agreeable; he moves forward without hesitation; his style is neat and flowing, and sometimes ornamental; and his gesture appropriate, and graceful. In answering the arguments of his opponent, he throws aside the rubbish which has been cast around them, and brushes away the cobwebs of sophistry in which they have been involved—exposes their fallacy and weakness—pours around his own such a flood of light, and maintains their correctness and truth with such ingenuity and force, that few who hear him can refuse their assent to the justness of his conclusions, or are able, if willing, to resist the power of his logic, and the force of his eloquence. He speaks, as if without premeditation, and the House is often surprised at the light he diffuses, and the information he displays. There is nothing, however, in Mr. S.’s style of eloquence very brilliant—he does not often use many of the embellishments of rhetoric. The power he seems to exercise is that of genius cultivated to a certain extent; but without stooping to avail itself of the assistance of

art. Like Burke, he is always prepared, because, like him, he reflects much ; and though, from his general habits, what he says has the appearance of being extemporaneous, he nevertheless thinks deeply on all subjects which are to present themselves for discussion, or are connected with the general objects of legislation. Mr. S. is therefore seldom at a loss, and never betrays any ignorance of the subject he may be called upon to discuss ; and so great is the affluence of his mind that he pours out arguments with a profusion, and employs illustrations, with an aptitude and skill, that none can listen to him without astonishment and pleasure.

Mr. Storrs is a lawyer, and has all the acuteness and ingenuity which the practice of that profession is apt to produce, but his habits are indolent, and his temperament hypochondriacal, and it is but seldom he is sufficiently roused to come out in his full strength. When he does, there are few that can conquer him in intellectual combat. Of Mr. S. it may be said, in the language of Burke, "his style of argument is neither trite or vulgar, nor subtle and abstruse ; he always *hits the House just between wind and water.*" With more firmness and decision of character, he would have a more decided influence, and if his ambition or his industry were equal to his genius, there is perhaps none that would take a higher stand in the opinion and esteem of his countrymen.

GEORGE M'DUFFIE.

This gentleman has acquired a high reputation, and certainly not an unmerited one, in the political world. He is still young, not being more than 35 years of age, and ranks among the first in the nation in all that constitutes intellectual superiority. Like Webster, he affords another example of the success of genius and industry unaided by family influence or wealth. Mr. M'Duffie has risen, it is said, from humble beginnings, and perhaps has felt too warmly and sensibly for his interest, the noble principle of gratitude. His genius was early discovered and appreciated by one who, by extending to him his patronage and friendship, has exercised an influence over him which it is thought has in some degree cast a shade upon his future prospects and lessened his political standing. He belongs to the southern school of politics, which may have some distinguished proselytes, but is not, I think, destined to spread its principles extensively, or soon to become triumphant or successful in this country. He had acquired a merited reputation by his abilities, and his course, during a part of the session of 1829-30, had exalted him in the estimation of his political friends and opponents. It was marked and approved by all; but he was not satisfied—recklessly dashed the cup from his lips, and by one false step lost in some degree the rank which he held in the minds of his countrymen as a legislator and a statesman. Nothing can, how-

ever, impair his reputation for ability. His talents and eloquence are not to be questioned. His mind is acute, discriminating and powerful. He labors incessantly, and when his passions and prejudices have no excitement, his intellectual operations are not only vigorous, but successful. He confines himself to no particular mode of reasoning; it is sometimes synthetic and sometimes analytic. His arguments are arranged with great clearness, and presented with force. His views are sometimes original and occasionally splendid. He is ingenious, and often makes up for the want of information on any particular subject by his ingenuity. Like Mr. Webster, he is a business speaker; he reasons like a man of business, and strives to satisfy the judgment, without appearing desirous to seize upon the imagination. He is studious and reserved, and devotes his time and attention to the business of the House, and that of the committees of which he may be a member, with unceasing assiduity. As a speaker, he is fluent, argumentative, and vehement. His manner, however, is rather ungraceful, and the vehemence of his gesture, instead of giving impressiveness to, tends to lessen the power of his eloquence. His action is too uniform and violent; his right arm is drawn back and thrust forward with energy, as if he was hurling the truth at the Speaker, which gives him the appearance of a pugilist in the act of striking his antagonist a blow. His voice too wants power and modulation; he cannot regulate

its cadences, or adapt its tones to the sentiment he utters. But what he says comes with great force and effect on the mind. He moves along with fluency, and declaims with vehemence. His reasoning is often solid and always ingenious; his sarcasm is keen, and his satire biting. He has an earnestness and fire about him, that give to all he says the appearance of sincerity and the force of truth. He does not dislike ornament, and his imagination is sometimes called upon for images, and his memory for illustrations, which are often apposite and felicitous. Possessing the warmth of feeling common to the South, he is occasionally, perhaps, too intemperate in language, and extravagant in sentiment, and may, sometimes, "overstep the modesty of nature;" but there is, notwithstanding, a redeeming spirit in the operations of his mind, which throw these minor blemishes into shade. We lose sight of the manner, in the soundness, and occasional elegance of the matter. Mr. McD. always makes himself well acquainted with the subject on which he means to address the House, and by reading, and reflection, stores his mind with images, arguments, and facts, calculated to enforce and defend the positions he may advance. There is in his speeches no pomp of erudition, no evidence of a mind imbued with classical beauty, none of the embellishments of poetry, and no attempts at wit. His native ore does not glitter, but effused by the heat of his mind, casts out, not a brilliant, but a uniform and continuous light, which serves to illu-

mine the path he takes, and to conduct the hearer to the retreats of truth. His style corresponds with the character of his mind, vigorous and occasionally elegant; his words are not, however, always the most choice or appropriate, but they flow with sufficient rapidity, and are well placed. He has the substance without the shadow of eloquence—the *principium et fons* of oratory, and the power of his mind is felt and acknowledged by all on whom he wishes it to operate. His temper is, however, somewhat too ardent, I think, to give him a decided influence, as the leader of a party. It is too apt to burst out into ebullitions and to become stormy and tempestuous. This must necessarily weaken his hold upon the opinions and feelings of his political friends, and though they acknowledge his ability, they cannot always confide in his discretion. He evidently aspires at political eminence, and this point he would assuredly attain, were he to pursue that policy which wisdom points out. He has merely to keep aloof from the conflicts of party; to lend himself to no faction; to become the instrument of no demagogue; and to identify himself with no ambitious aspirant. Let him consult the great interests of his country, cast aside all local prejudices, and think and act independently and fearlessly on the great principles of national prosperity and happiness. Let the world see that he is stimulated more by the spirit of patriotism than by attachment to party; that his great idol is the good of his country, and not the

success of a faction or the advancement of an individual, and the eyes of the intelligent and virtuous will be fixed with delight upon him, because his career will be the career of patriotism, and his triumph the triumph of virtue, independence, and talent.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON, —, 1818.*

Since my last, I have been to visit Mount Vernon, memorable for having once been the residence of the illustrious Washington, the saviour of his country. It is now in the possession of a near relation, of the same name, who is one of the associate judges of the supreme court, and a very amiable man. It is beautifully situated, on the right bank of the Potomac, which is seen from it as far as the eye can reach, pursuing its meandering course to the Chesapeake. I must confess it was not without feelings of deep and intense interest, that I strolled over ground consecrated by the ashes of one of the greatest and best men the world has produced. The richness and beauty of the landscape, were lost in the gloom of melancholy reflection, and I gazed on the humble sepulchre which contained his mortal remains, with those feelings which I know you would experience in beholding, on the far famed plain of Troy, the tumuli of Hector, Achilles, and Patroclus. There is a singular kind of pleasure in contemplating the ashes of the "mighty dead," who slumber beneath you. It is a pleasure which resembles the sensation produced by the heavenly tones of the Æolian harp, heard amid the repose and tranquillity of night. The mind is thrown off its poise, and floats along the stream of time, mellowed

* From "Letters from Washington."

and chastened by retrospection. The fame of a great man preserves every thing connected with him from oblivion ; and, in the language of Bruce, “ while even the situations of magnificent cities are forgotten, we are familiar with the insignificant village that sheltered some humble philosopher, or the rill that quenched the thirst of some indigent bard.”

From an attentive perusal of the American history, and a close examination of the character of Washington, it appears to me that the principal feature of his mind was judgment, which always led him to avoid the dangers of precipitancy, and the errors which sometimes result from a more vivid and brilliant imagination. The dictates of that judgment constituted the line of his conduct, which was, of course, marked with the most consummate prudence. This virtue never seems to have deserted him either as a statesman or a warrior, in a public or a private capacity. His prudence and caution were particularly observable in his military career, and, like Pericles, he never willingly came to an engagement when the danger was considerable, or the success very uncertain ; nor did he envy the glory, or imitate the conduct of those generals who are admired and applauded because their rash enterprises have been attended with success.* He had many difficulties to encounter, but these difficulties he readily surmounted. Patriotism animated, and prudence conducted him to triumph. With a limit-

* Plutarch's Pericles.

ed education, and little patronage, he paved his way to greatness, and by his virtues cast a blaze of glory around his character, that time can only increase, and that posterity must contemplate with enthusiasm and delight. There is no parallel for such a man in the annals of the world ; so singular a combination of virtue, with so few vices ; such disinterested patriotism, and such unimpeachable integrity, with so many temptations to swerve, and so many inducements to betray, were never before united. Immovable in the hour of danger, no difficulties could shake, no terrors appal him. He was always the same, in the glare of prosperity, and in the gloom of adversity. Like Fabricius, he could not be moved from the paths of virtue and honor, and like Epaminondas, he made every thing bend to the interest of his country. His country was his idol, and patriotism the predominant feeling of his mind. Personal aggrandisement and individual resentment and interest, were alike sacrificed to this overwhelming passion, which no difficulty could weaken, and no neglect destroy. Washington was reserved, without being haughty ; religious, without being bigotted ; great in all stations, and sublime in all his actions, whether he moved in the sphere of domestic obscurity, or employed his energies in wielding the destinies of his country. Antiquity would have made him a demi-god ; posterity will revere him as a great and good man. Every nation can boast of its heroes, its statesmen, and its bards, but there are few that have produced their Washing-

tons. He stands almost alone in the history of the world, and will be venerated while virtue and patriotism have an influence on human action.

You will, no doubt, be astonished to understand that the remains of this great and excellent man still repose in a humble sepulchre, on the estate at which he resided, and from which, like Cincinnatus, he was several times called by his country. The Americans are certainly not ungrateful, but they seem to have an aversion to perpetuate a man's name by "monumental brass," or to express their gratitude by *splendid* tombs, or ponderous and magnificent mausolea. Your long acquaintance with Westminster Abbey, where the high and the low, the great and the obscure, the good man and the villain, are alike honored by their country or their friends, may perhaps draw from you a burst of indignation, at the apparent apathy and indifference of this great republic, to the memory and past services of its illustrious dead; but I question whether it be not correct policy. To begin would be to have no end, and the erection of a monument to Washington might terminate, as in Russia, with a monument to a favorite dog. Since the invention of writing, and the present extension of knowledge, the "storied urn and animated bust," have become almost useless. History will record with fidelity the illustrious actions of him who has deserved well of his country, and his name will be as perpetual as if Pelion had been piled on Ossa to preserve his memory. It was, doubtless, owing to the want of this art that the hum-

ble tumuli of the Celts and the massy pyramids* of the Egyptians were formed ; they had no other mode of expressing their gratitude or of perpetuating the memory of their dead. After all, perhaps the best monument is to “ read their gratitude in a nation’s eyes.”

Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?
Can honor’s voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery sooth the dull cold ear of death ?

It is but justice, however, to state that though the American government has refused to erect a monument to the memory of its illustrious hero, his countrymen have not been quite so fastidious ; and the citizens of Baltimore, with that enthusiasm and public spirit which have done them so much credit, are now engaged in building a monument that will at once evince their gratitude, their patriotism and their taste. It may be safely asserted that the Americans pay less attention generally to the depositories of their dead than most other nations ; they seem to be no sooner laid in the earth than they are forgotten, and the tear of sorrow and the hand of affection but seldom bedews or decorates the sward under which the friend, the parent or the relative reposes. Among the ancients you will recollect this was part of their religion, and we owe to the tenderness and affection of a Corinthian nurse for her deceased

* Leur mass indestructible a fatigue le tems.

De Lille.

charge, the rich and splendid capital which beautifies the Corinthian shaft.* We do not often look in the burial grounds of this country for the pensive cypress, or the melancholy willow, the virgin weeping over the urn of her departed lover, or the mother hanging over the grave of her darling child ; no flower blooms bedewed with the tear of affection : no zephyr wafts the odours of melancholy love ; all is waste and dreary, and dead as the sunken grave over which you pass, and a few stones, on which are engraved the age and name of the deceased, are all that remain to manifest the affection of the living to those who have passed away and are no more.

Bushrod Washington, the present proprietor of Mount Vernon, is the nephew of the General. He seems to be about fifty years of age ; is below the middle size, and apparently nervous and feeble. His complexion is pale and cadaverous, but his countenance has the lineaments of benevolence and good nature. He has long been one of the judges of the supreme court of the United States, and has, during that period, discovered no deficiency in his acquaintance with the law. His decisions are, I believe,

* “ Autrofois elles coupoient leurs longues tresses sur la tombe de leurs parens ou de leurs amis et leur sacrifioient ainsi l'ornement dont elles etoient le plus jalouses.

O vue delectieuse des tombeaux de la Grece combien de doux momens J'ai passes a vous contempler. Mes pensees erroient sur ees monumens comme les oiseaux funebres qui voltigent autour.”—M. Guy's voyage litteraire de la Grece.

Iter mortis ingridimur nascentes.....Sinec.

generally correct, though not very remarkable. I know not whether he was ever distinguished for his eloquence at the bar ; but little seems to be known of his powers as an advocate or a lawyer, and that little does not tend to place him much beyond mediocrity. He appears to be one of those men to whom the pleasures of the domestic circle are more seducing than the fitful though captivating splendor which surrounds the temples of the statesman or the warrior ; and he prefers what the world would term the inglorious repose of domestic felicity, to the feverish agitation and sickly turmoil of public life.

Mount Vernon has become, like Jerusalem and Mecca, the resort of the travellers of all nations, who come within its vicinity ; veneration and respect for the memory of the great and illustrious chief, whose body it contains, lead all who have heard his name, to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of patriotism and public worth, and to stroll over the ground which has been consecrated by the repose, and hallowed by the ashes of heroism and virtue. A twig, a flower, or even a stone becomes interesting when taken from the spot where Washington lived and died, and no man quits it without bearing with him some memento to exhibit to his family and his friends.



SAMUEL L. SOUTHARD.

The life of this gentleman furnishes another illustration of the advantages of the free Constitution of this country. Like Clay, Webster, Wirt, and many others known to fame, he is the fabricator of his own fortune, and has acquired the distinction which he has reached by the unaided efforts of his own genius, and intellectual energies. He was not, in the language of Burke, "swaddled, and rocked, and nursed," into eminence, but owes the reputation he enjoys, and the rank he has attained, to himself and the liberal institutions of his country.

Mr. Southard is a native of New Jersey, and was born of parents respectable, but not wealthy. He is now in the 48th year of his age, of a feeble constitution, and with a body shattered by disease, to which he has been occasionally subject through life. With that spirit of independence which characterizes his genius, he threw himself early upon his own resources; and, after passing through his collegiate studies at Princeton, with great honor, he commenced his career at the age of seventeen, as an assistant instructor, in an academy which had been recently established at Mendham, in New Jersey. The great exertions and incessant labors which this new occupation demanded, so impaired his health, that he found it necessary to relinquish his school; and, after spending some months in Washington,

where his father, a representative from New Jersey, then resided, he proceeded on a tour through Virginia, and finally stopped at the hospitable mansion of Mr. Talliaferro, into whose family he was soon admitted as a private teacher. Here he was induced to enter upon the study of Jurisprudence, rather for the purpose of enlarging his sphere of knowledge than with any design to pursue it as a profession. His progress was, however, so rapid, and the science itself so agreeable to him, that he determined to continue his studies till he was qualified to appear at the bar. He soon after returned to his native State, and there entered upon his new profession, with the most flattering prospects of success. He successively filled the situations of Prosecutor, Master, and Examiner in Chancery, and Law Reporter, while he continued to practice as a Counsellor, in the highest Courts of the State. And such were the solid nature of his legal attainments, and his talents as a public speaker, that he rose rapidly to distinction. An event at this time occurred, which gave at once stability and brilliancy to his reputation. Though young, he was employed in an important controversy between the States of New York and New Jersey, concerning the boundary line, arising from a dispute between private individuals respecting the privilege of steamboat navigation. Some of the most eminent lawyers of the United States were engaged in this great question, and, though Mr. Southard had to oppose Mr.

Emmett, the most brilliant ornament of the New York bar, and to assist Mr. J. Hopkinson, who stood equally high as a lawyer and advocate at the Philadelphia bar, he sustained himself with so much ability and eloquence, that his reputation was at once established.

So high was the estimation in which he was now held, that he was brought out as a candidate in opposition to one of the most popular men of the Federal party, J. Ewing, Esq., and succeeded in being returned as a member of the Legislature of his State, over his highly esteemed and respectable opponent. His health, however, becoming daily more and more enfeebled by his professional labors, he was induced, in order that his life might be prolonged, to retire from the bar; and a vacancy having occurred on the Bench of the Supreme Court in New Jersey, he was appointed to fill this high and responsible station, at the early age of twenty-three years. In this situation he continued till he was elected in 1820, to the Senate of the United States, where he remained till he was called, by President Monroe, in 1823, to a seat in the Cabinet, as Secretary of the Navy. In this situation he continued till 1829, when the present Administration came into power. At the elevation of Mr. Adams to the Presidency of the United States, he was so well pleased with the manner in which Mr. Southard had discharged his official duties, as Head of the Navy Department, that he expressed his

earnest desire that he would continue in the situation which he had filled with so much ability and satisfaction; and, during the absence of Mr. Rush, then Minister to England, who had been appointed Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. S. was designated to perform the additional duties of that office. After his resignation in 1829, he returned to New Jersey, and, in a few years, was elected Governor of that State. In 1833 he was again sent to the Senate of the United States, in the place of Mahlon Dickerson, where he is now considered as one of the most prominent among the eloquent and distinguished members of that body.

Mr. Southard is, in person, about the middle size, with a face strongly marked, and indicative of thought. His compressed lips evince great firmness, and the general character of his countenance is that of blended mildness and asperity. His mind possesses great affluence and energy, with a happy mixture of judgment and imagination. It is active in its operations, and fertile in its resources. He has accumulated a large treasure of facts, by reading and observation, and employs them to enforce, illustrate, and embellish what he has to say. His imagination gilds and ornaments what his judgment sanctions or his memory supplies. He does not sport on the surface of his subject, and amuse himself, or those whom he addresses, with the mere flowers of fancy, however gaudy, or the ornaments of rhetoric, however splendid; but explores its

deepest recesses—casts the light of his intellect into it—illuminates what is dark, explains and illustrates what is obscure, and renders it clear and intelligible to the meanest capacity. His industry has been indefatigable and unceasing, and its fruits are seen in every intellectual effort he makes. He brings to the investigation of every subject, a mind fraught with knowledge, and capable of the closest and most accurate reasoning. As a speaker, his voice is not agreeable; it wants melody and intonation, but is distinct, though, from the weakness of his body, sometimes tremulous. His action is appropriate, and occasionally vehement; his diction is correct and fluent, and his style vigorous and flowing. His feelings are ardent, and this ardor is imparted to his manner, when he speaks. In private life he is mild and amiable; and no one, seeing him in the domestic circle, would suppose that he ever indulged in the bitterness of invective, or could give vent to the pungent sarcasm or terrible denunciations which he sometimes utters on the floor of the Senate, when roused by the appearance of oppression, folly, injustice, or tyranny.

THOMAS EWING.

This gentleman, like Mr. Southard, has risen to distinction by the native energies of his mind, and his own unaided exertions. It is pleasing to see, in

our country, so many men of great intellectual power, who have risen to eminence and usefulness from obscurity; and who, like the sun emerging from the lap of night, have cast a radiance over the path they have pursued. Genius, like truth, will prevail; and favored by propitious circumstances, seldom fails to reach the rank and elevation which are the reward of its exertions. It is sometimes true, that

“Far from Envy’s lurid eye,
The fairest fruits of genius rear,
Content to see them born and die
In Friendship’s small, but genial sphere.”

But genius, fired by ambition, and a desire to be useful, will not, in this country, where the highest political rank and distinction are accessible to all, remain long in obscurity or inaction; and though curbed for a time by poverty, or checked in its career by untoward circumstances, it seldom fails to attain the goal to which it has directed its aim.

Mr. Ewing was born in Virginia, in 1789. His father was a revolutionary soldier, and soon after the birth of young Ewing, removed to the State of Ohio. Mr. Ewing is indebted for his elements of knowledge, to the care and attention of his eldest sister, who taught him to read, and the only accessible book being the Bible, he employed himself in constantly pouring over its sublime pages. When he was eight years old, he was sent to school about seven months, and the only additional education he

received till he was 23 years of age, was two quarters tuition, under two successive teachers. But he had acquired a love of reading, and all his leisure hours were devoted to it. His father being in humble circumstances, young Ewing's life was necessarily a laborious one; but, obliged as he was, to toil daily, he nevertheless availed himself of every opportunity to improve his mind, and to be what his highest ambition then led him to become—a scholar. But poverty seemed to oppose an insuperable barrier to his career, and he was about yielding up to despondency, when a young man, who had seen something of the world, and who was hired by his father as an assistant on the farm, roused him from his apathy, and prevailed upon him to accompany him to the Kanawha Salines, where he procured employment as a common laborer. After an absence of three or four months, he returned with eighty dollars in his pocket, which he generously gave to his father, to save his land from being forfeited. In the following spring, Mr. Ewing again returned to the Kanawha Salines, where he labored assiduously till November, and succeeded in realizing about four hundred dollars—out of which, after paying a balance of sixty dollars, still due on his father's property, he was enabled to indulge his favorite propensity, by spending the winter at an academy at Athens, where he was encouraged to make additional efforts to prosecute his studies, and acquire the power which knowledge bestows. He

returned once more to his former labors, and continued at them for two years. These severe toils affected his health; which, however, a short residence at home restored, and he again entered the academy which he had left about two years before, and proceeded to labor mentally, with the same ardor and intensity that he had labored corporeally. His progress is said to have been very rapid; but being satisfied that his funds, which were daily diminishing, would be insufficient to enable him to complete his education, he opened a school in Gallipolis, which, in the course of a quarter he threw up, not liking the employment, and returned to his former occupation at the salt works. He now hired a furnace, and by extraordinary labor he acquired a sum in the course of a month, to enable him, as he believed, to complete his studies. He was right; and in the spring of 1815 he received the degree of A. B., and was the first to receive that academical honor in Ohio. He was now 26 years of age, and commenced the study of the law, in the office of General Beecher, who, after he had finished his legal studies, from a high opinion of his powers, took him into partnership, and in his new and favorite profession he rose rapidly to distinction. As a proof of his ardor and assiduity, he practiced in eight different counties in the State in which he lived. His filial affection was again manifested, in the purchase of a fine tract of land in Indiana, with the proceeds of his profession, on which he placed

his father and family. He had now acquired so high a reputation for ability and talent at the bar, that the Legislature of Ohio elected him, in 1832, to represent that State in the Senate of the United States; and in this distinguished body he has continued ever since, with an increase of fame, and an untiring application to the important duties of his station, that has given him a claim to the gratitude of his country.

Mr. Ewing is, in person, athletic and muscular, broad across the chest, vigorous, but not elegant in his proportions, or graceful in his motions. His countenance is expressive of good nature, and enlivened by a frequent smile; and though awkward in his appearance, his manners have a natural ease that even an early intercourse with refined and polished society could not have rendered more agreeable. Nature has bestowed upon him a mind of great powers, which have been cultivated to the extent his limited means and opportunities would afford. It is analytic and logical, rather than brilliant and imaginative—oratory, as an art, has not claimed much of his attention; and though his arrangement is lucid, and his mind affluent in topics, and fertile in arguments, his speeches possess few of the embellishments of rhetoric, or the elegancies of art. He cannot blend the *utile* with the *dulci* or amuse while he persuades. He always endeavors to edify, and but seldom attempts to please. Reasoning is his forte—in that he is conscious of his

power, and will not trust himself to the efforts of fancy. His diction is plain and unadorned, not verbose or involved, but clear and suited to his reasoning, and is feeble or vigorous, according to the strength or weakness of his argument. Though in a great degree self-taught, his conceptions are not distinguished for any originality, nor does he present his subject in a manner very striking or unique. The hearer listens, and is perhaps convinced, but he is not pleased. There is too much uniformity in his manner and matter, and too little of the splendor of imagination to produce great effect. Mr. Ewing is too good natured to deal much in sarcasm, or to resort to bitterness of invective; and he never electrifies his auditors by unexpected bursts of eloquence. He is sagacious, argumentative and laborious; often eloquent, but never oratorical. As a politician, his principles are firm and unyielding, never fluctuating between self aggrandizement and the interests of his country; never balancing between right and wrong; but always directing his efforts to that which he conceives will promote the glory of the nation, and the happiness of mankind.

W. C. PRESTON.

The highest efforts of eloquence are usually found in Republics; because stronger motives exist to call them out, than under any other form of Government.

Public speaking is held in high estimation in this, as in all other countries ; because it is the most effective instrument in the attainment of political distinction, and forensic fame. In the United States, it almost always leads to eminence and wealth, when it is connected with good sense and talent. Where so many practice public speaking with success, it requires not only ability, but great effort and labor, to reach excellence ; and of the few who may now be said to stand “proudly eminent” in the path of eloquence, is the gentleman whose name heads this sketch. Mr. Preston is, I believe, a native of Virginia, and a relation of the celebrated Patrick Henry, whose reputation as an orator, seems to have stimulated his young ambition, and to have excited him to exertion. Of his history I have learnt but little, and can only speak of him as a parliamentary orator. He was preceded by a high reputation, which his first effort on the floor of the Senate not only increased, but strengthened. The new and noble arena into which he was thrown, afforded him full range for the exercise and display of his peculiar powers, to which all listened with delight, and many with astonishment and admiration ; and he was at once placed in the first rank of American orators. Mr. Preston’s mind is more imaginative than logical ; and every thing that passes through it is embellished by the rich hues of his imagination. He reasons, and reasons well, but he is fonder of ornament than logic, and delights

more in the creations of poetry than in the cold formula of argument. The mind of the hearer is never so much satisfied with the force of his reasoning, as it is gratified by the splendor of his decorations. These are not so puerile and exuberant as to cloy, or offend, but are introduced with great delicacy of taste, and propriety of application, and sure to rivet the attention, and charm the mind. His imagination is too warm for great depth of thought ; his judgement is sound and discriminating, but is always exercised in connection with the brilliant faculty we have mentioned. The skeleton of argument is always adorned and rendered agreeable by the splendid drapery he casts around it ; and the hearer is struck with wonder and admiration, without being at all times satisfied with the truth of his positions, or the correctness of his conclusions. His style partakes of the character of his mind—it is rich, ornate and splendid, but still adapted to the subject on which it is employed. Mr. Preston is an admirable actor, as well as orator ; he knows how to introduce his clap-traps—how to strike the auditor with astonishment and admiration, when he least suspects the blaze which is to follow—and how to suit the word to the action, and the action to the word, without o’erstepping the “modesty of nature.” When the vivid flash and burst of thunder have passed off, the mind of the hearer is permitted to sink into repose, and to wander for a time along the paths of argument, till another peal startles him from

his tranquillity, rivets his whole attention, and fills his soul with delight and wonder. All this is done, too, with the most masterly power of acting—the attitude—the expression of the countenance—the whole action are suited to the thought, and calculated to give effect to the feeling he wishes to excite. His illustrations are happy and beautiful, and his images poetical, and sometimes gorgeous. He does not indulge in puerile conceits, or extravagancies of fancy, but in figures and images that the finest taste would relish as appropriate and beautiful. He does not labor to say striking things, but delights to throw out beautiful thoughts, “thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.” His is not the brilliancy of the epigramatist—not the brilliancy to which the lines of the French poet could apply—

“Si tu brillais sans etre utile,
A ton dernier jour on dirait,
Ce n'est qu'une etoile qui file,
Qui file, file, et disparaît.”

It is the light of a fervid imagination, becoming more glowing and heated by its action, as the “chariot wheels”—to use an expression of Coleridge—“get hot by driving fast.” No two men could differ more essentially, than Mr. Preston and his colleague, Mr. Calhoun. The former possesses great warmth of imagination, and the latter scarcely any—the one delights in the richest arabesque ornaments of fancy, and the other in the simple beauty of mathematical demonstration. The mind of the

one is rhetorical and imaginative—that of the other analytic and axiomatic—fond of generalizing, and more pleased with a syllogism than the most splendid poetical image; in short, the one is a rhetorician the other a logician. Mr. Preston bears a stronger resemblance to Mr. Pinckney, a sketch of whom will be found in this volume, than perhaps, any orator this country has produced, tho' in depth and expansiveness of thought, Mr. Pinckney was, I think, superior. In action, and most of the artificial graces of oratory, Mr. Preston excels, though in voice they were both somewhat defective. Mr. Preston is more of an elocutionist than was the great Maryland orator. He has studied better models, or possesses greater histrionic talent. The declamation of some of his fine conceptions is equal, if not superior to that of Macready, Booth or Cooper; and his tall and dignified form—his manly attitude—his graceful gesticulation, and the appropriate adaption of his voice to the sentiment or feeling by which he is influenced, give an impressiveness and power to what he utters, that are felt and acknowledged by all. Mr. Preston seems to be aware that the taste of the American public is not pleased with what is merely airy and brilliant, in the efforts of an orator, and therefore, endeavors to blend the useful with the agreeable, the grave with the gay, the lively with the severe. He is more of the Roman than the Grecian orator; glowing superb—fervent and magnificent. On ordinary questions he does

not reason like ordinary men; and though he is not heated and stimulated as on great occasions, his oratorical habits and feelings never desert him; and he pours out his thoughts in the style and with the action of an orator conscious of his powers. But he seems to think that these powers are chiefly felt, and possess their principal charm when employed in giving oral expression to the operations of his mind. I have heard that he will never consent to revise the notes of the Reporter, or prepare his speeches for publication, and hence no full report of those he has delivered on the floor of the Senate has yet been given to the public. If he perseveres in this determination, his fate may be that of Sheridan, whose speeches, from a similar indifference, are now almost forgotten from the skeleton form in which they were printed; or, perhaps, as has been suggested by an English writer, from a "consciousness that their material was not fit for posterity." The reputation of an orator who leaves no specimen of his eloquence behind him, like that of the distinguished actor, hangs upon the pen of the biographer or historian. After he has passed away from the stage of life, nothing exists by which he can be judged, or which can give him a claim to the consideration of posterity. What idea can even the present generation form of the acting of Garrick, or the oratory of Patrick Henry? We read the speeches of Burke, Erskine, Curran, &c., with great pleasure and benefit, as monuments of genius,

and as calculated to display their peculiar powers ; and may form some just conception of the manner in which they were delivered ; but of the eloquence of Patrick Henry and even of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, we entertain but a vague and indefinite notion—a misty outline of something great and brilliant, but it has no distinct “form or pressure.” Mr. Preston excels in the higher walks of eloquence ; in the power of rousing the passions, and exciting the feeling he wishes to call out, at will ; but the Senate of the United States is not a proper field for the exercise of such powers. Reason and not feeling must be appealed to—facts more than fancy must be employed. But still facts may be so splendidly embellished, and so skilfully presented as to produce all the effect of the finest painting of the imagination. There is much pungency and keenness in Mr. P’s. sarcasm, but it is polished and courtly. He does not deal in the coarse invective, and vituperation of vulgar minds, but the shafts he sends forth are like the thunderbolts of Jove eradicated with the splendor of lightning. Such is Mr. Preston, as an orator ; what he may be as a statesman, time must develope. He has been too short a period in the councils of the nation to enable one to judge correctly of his capacity in this career of life. Pitt was a statesman, as well as an orator. He possessed the genius, intelligence and expansiveness of mind necessary for both ; and Mr. Preston has discovered no want of either of these intellec-

tual qualities, and time may yet place him in a situation where those qualities may be called into successful operation.

BENJ. WATKINS LEIGH.

This gentleman stands high in the ranks of the distinguished men of his native State—a state once fruitful of great men. His reputation preceded him in the Senate of the United States, where he took the place of his present colleague. Mr. Leigh is low in stature, but of good person. His head is bald—his forehead expansive, and his features regular, with an eye of great brilliancy, and lips expressive of firmness and decision. His manners are plain, unostentatious, republican and easy. He blends great talent with simplicity, and has a nice sense of what is just and honorable. The distinguishing trait of Mr. Leigh's mind, is acuteness. He reasons with great precision, and unfolds the subject he is handling with a singular power of analysis and eloquent brevity. In the process of investigation, he seeks not the aid of embellishment, nor the arts of oratory, to catch the attention of his hearers, but aims at conviction—at the developement of abstract truths, which he presents with such clearness, accuracy and force, that few can resist the conclusions to which he leads them. When he speaks, he does not seem to aim at effect, and is not

anxious about display ; but speaks that he may enlighten and convince, with all the earnestness and sincerity of one who thinks that what he utters is founded upon the immutable basis of truth and reason, and cannot be overthrown. He does not attempt to throw out brilliant things—to be epigrammatic—sarcasm is not his forte. “The gall bladder,” as has been said of another, “was omitted in his composition”—he has no bitterness in his character; and, therefore, what he says is never offensive, or irritating to those with whom he contends. His style of speaking is more forensic than parliamentary. He has been more accustomed to the bar than the hall of legislation. He examines his subject closely and analytically ; his observations are sometimes trite, but generally acute ; his points are usually strong, and he forms them with some felicity of illustration, and great strength and lucidness of argument. His attacks are never ferocious or wanton—the wounds he inflicts never rankle, and though he prostrates his opponent, his triumph is never the cause of pain. His conduct on the floor of the Senate, and his conduct in the social circle, are alike distinguished by urbanity. In all conditions he is courteous, gentlemanly and kind. His style is simple and vigorous—seldom diffuse, and occasionally elegant. His manner is quiet and easy, but not graceful ; his voice wants variety of intonation, and harmony of cadence, and his action is not impressive. But he is a strong and powerful

debater ; a correct and high-minded man, and an effective, and sometimes eloquent speaker.

A. ROBBINS.

This gentleman has been a Senator from Rhode Island, for several years. He would appear to be between sixty and seventy years of age, but no intellectual decay is yet visible. In person he is below the middle size—thin, and lame in one of his legs, which, from the fatigue he experiences in standing, prevents him from taking a part in the debates of the Senate as often as his inclination, and perhaps his sense of duty would induce him. Like most men of his age, he adheres to the fashions of his youth, and wears his thin hair in a cue, which, for a man of his years, is remarkable for its darkness. Mr. Robbins was, in the early part of his life, a professor of languages, and subsequently a Judge. There is no member of either House whose classical attainments can in the least approach those of Judge Robbins. His mind has been deeply imbued with classic lore, and enriched with all the treasures of the fine languages of Greece and Rome. He has made it his business to study them by day, and pour over them by night :

“Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.”

until he has made himself master of all their numer-

ous beauties, and excellencies. Even now he amuses his leisure hours in turning over the pages of Demosthenes, Isocrates, and the Greek historians and poets ; and would rather peruse a Greek than an English tragedy. On almost all the great questions brought up for discussion in the Senate, Mr. R. takes a part ; and he never fails to claim the attention of that body. His speeches are distinguished for great purity and precision of style ; fine classical images, and historical and felicitous illustrations. They always partake of the character of the scholar, and are what may be called learned. His research is considerable ; his arrangements lucid, and his logic clear and forcible.

LEWIS CASS.

Mr. Cass is now in the 54th year of his age. He was born in New Hampshire, in 1782. After completing his education, he emigrated to Ohio, where he read law, under Governor Meigs, and pursued it as a profession for several years, with great success. He is said to have displayed, in this profession, distinguished ability ; and his reputation at the bar, led to his election as a member of the Legislature of that State, and subsequently to the appointment of Marshal ; a situation which he held till the year 1813. Patriotic as well as talented, he volunteered his services in the army, under the command of

Gen. Hull, and received the commission of a Colonel. Situated as Mr. Cass was, this act must have sprung from the purest patriotism, and not from ambition, or the love of military distinction. It was his good fortune to strike the *first blow* against the enemy of his country, and with a detachment of two hundred and eighty men he attacked the advanced posts of the British army, near Malden, and drove them back on the main body. The proclamation issued by Gen. Hull, was the production of Mr. Cass' pen, and if his counsels had been followed, the American historian would never have had occasion to blush in recording the disgraceful surrender of Detroit. Though deeply mortified at this event, his ardor was not diminished, nor his spirit subdued. He continued to manifest the firmness of the patriot and the courage of the soldier, in all the subsequent contests on the frontiers, and had the glory to participate in the defeat of Gen. Proctor and the celebrated Indian Chief, Tecumseh, on the river Thames. After the termination of the war, in 1815, Col. Cass removed to Detroit, and was soon after appointed Governor of the Territory of Michigan, which owes much of its prosperity to his able and efficient administration. In 1820 he planned an expedition, for the purpose of exploring the sources of the Mississippi, which was successfully accomplished, and its result published in Schoolcraft's Journal. For several years he was engaged by the General Government, in negotiating treaties

with several tribes of Indians, which he successfully concluded, and by which he secured to the United States, millions of acres of valuable lands. The great merits and services of Governor Cass being known to, and appreciated by Gen. Jackson, he was invited, in 1831, to a seat in the Cabinet, as Secretary of War, which he accepted; and in this department has continued ever since to act with his usual ability, efficiency and good sense.

In the midst of his political and military occupations, however, he never neglected to cultivate his literary taste, and to indulge his literary propensities. His first most prominent effort, was an article in the *North American Review*, of 1825, on the Narrative of one John Dunn Hunter, which he satisfactorily demonstrated to be an imposture. Another article succeeded this, in the same Journal, on the subject of the Aborigines of this country, which was read with great interest and benefit, and which contributed to increase his literary reputation. In 1828 an Historical Society was established in Michigan, of which he was elected the President, and before which he delivered the first address. In 1830 Governor Cass was invited to pronounce a discourse at the Columbia College, in New York, which displayed great research and learning. This literary effort, and the reputation he had acquired, induced that institution to confer on him the honorary degree of L. L. D., which in this instance at least, was wisely and properly bestowed. Secre-

tary Cass is an honorary member of the American Philosophical Society, and of the Historical Societies of Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Indiana. He has recently been elected the President of the American Historical Society, established in Washington ; before which, in the Hall of Representatives, he delivered the first Annual Address. This discourse, though somewhat defective in the *lucidus ordo*, possessed great merit ; and will add another leaf to the laurel crown that encircles his brow. Next to this, his most elaborate literary production is a recent able article, in the December No. of the the American Quarterly Review, on a work by Captain I. H. Cooke, of the British army, which professes to give a Narrative of the attack on New Orleans, in 1814—15. This article which has been attributed to his pen, contains a full, correct and spirited account of the operations of the American and British armies at the siege of that city. His official papers and literary essays, are written in a style of great perspicuity and vigor, and evince no little labor, and research, and a great familiarity with the different subjects he undertakes to handle. The discourse pronounced before the American Historical Society, will furnish a fair specimen of the style and character of Governor Cass' literary compositions.

As a speaker his voice is too feeble and indistinct for effect, and though an able lawyer, he could never have been an eloquent advocate. The prom-

inent features of Governor Cass' mind, are judgment and memory ; both of which he has improved by observation and exercise. He has read much, and treasured up a mass of useful facts, and much valuable learning, on which he has the faculty to draw at pleasure. He is laborious, attentive and indefatigable in the discharge of his official duties ; studious and devoted to the acquisition of knowledge, and solicitous to render himself useful in every sphere of life in which he may be placed. He is kind and generous in his disposition—a friend to the poor, and the patron of merit in every rank of society. His mind is expanded and liberal, and does not stoop to the narrowness of party views. Fortune has been propitious to him in his temporal concerns, *et longo post tempore venit*—and has made him wealthy in his advanced age ; a condition which affords him an opportunity to indulge the liberal propensities of his nature, in elegant hospitalities, and to enlarge his sphere of usefulness. He can now enjoy the *otium cum dignitate*, and retreat, when he pleases, into the shades of retirement, without the necessity of labor, and relieved from the anxieties which attend upon the privation of wealth in the evening of life. Governor Cass is, in person, about the middle size ; well proportioned and not ungraceful. His face is oval and fleshy, his mouth is wide, and his complexion fair. He wears a wig, which, like most wigs, gives a heavy and clumsy appearance to his head ; but it is well

and strongly marked. In his manners he is grave, without being repulsive; dignified without stiffness, and easy without being familiar. His countenance expresses the kindness of his nature, and his eye the warm feelings of his heart; and no one quits his society without being convinced of his moral worth and satisfied of his intellectual superiority.

LEVI WOODBURY.

Mr. Woodbury was born in New Hampshire, early in the year 1790, and is now in the 46th year of his age. He received the elementary part of his education in the free schools of his native village, in which he afterwards taught at different times. He was engaged to instruct a large school at Pepperell, in Massachusetts, when he was but fourteen years old, and though so young, is said to have given general satisfaction. In 1805 he entered Dartmouth College, where he continued for four years. In 1824, as a testimony of the estimation in which his attainments were held, his Alma Mater conferred on him the degree of L. L. D. During his collegiate course he attended the law school at Litchfield, in Connecticut, for a year; and commenced the practice of his profession in 1812. At this period of his life, he entered into the political contests which then prevailed, and united himself to the Democratic party, which he assisted with his ta-

lents. The Federal party was, however, dominant in his State, and continued to be so till 1816, during which he devoted himself to his profession, in which he acquired great distinction. His legal knowledge was so highly appreciated that he was appointed, in 1817, a judge of the superior court of New Hampshire—the highest judicial tribunal of the State. His legal opinions are said to have evinced extensive research and accurate discrimination. Many of them have been published in New Hampshire Reports.

In 1819 he married Miss Clapp, of Portland, and removed to Portsmouth. A few years afterwards he was elected Governor of New Hampshire, and at the expiration of his term he returned to the practice of his profession.

In 1825 he was elected representative from the town of Portsmouth; at the meeting of the legislature he was chosen speaker of the house, and at the close of the session was elected Senator of the United States. During the six years he continued in that body, he participated in all its most important discussions, and was placed on the most important committees. Though thus devoted to legislative life, he did not neglect his professional pursuits, and was employed during the recess of Congress as counsel, in cases involving great interests, before the superior court of his native State.

At the expiration of his Senatorial term, he declined a re-election; but was not, however, allowed

to retire from public life. He was chosen a Senator for his District in the State Senate ; but being invited by President Jackson to a seat in the Cabinet, as Secretary of the Navy, he resigned the former and accepted the situation of the head of the Navy Department. Upon a new organization of the Cabinet, at a subsequent period, he was transferred to the Treasury Department, where he now is.

Mr. Woodbury is a member of the New Hampshire and American Historical Societies, and belongs to several other scientific and literary associations in this country. In person he is above the middle size, well proportioned, but somewhat *en bon point*. The top of his head is bald, but his hair is untouched with the frosts of age ; his face is oval, his eye black and soft in its expression, and an agreeable smile plays around his mouth. He has the '*mens sana in corpore sano*.'—His mind is as active and vigorous as his body. He is capable of great intellectual labor, and to him *labor est voluptas*.

Mr. Woodbury is more solid than brilliant, more desirous to reason than to sparkle ; more anxious to address the judgment than the imagination. His argument, however, when he spoke, possessed a good deal of ingenuity, and he was remarkable for the art with which he handled the subject under discussion. His elocution was easy and sufficiently graceful ; his style is perspicuous and flowing, and his cadences not deficient in harmony. He was al-

ways cool and collected, never indicating any warmth of temper, or suffering himself to indulge in sarcasm and invective.

There was nothing showy or brilliant in his speeches ; nothing that was calculated to strike the imagination or excite the passions, but much to satisfy and convince the reason of the hearer. From his long practice at the bar, he had acquired no little of that sophistry into which those who pursue the legal profession are too apt to fall, from the frequent necessity they are under to "make the worse appear the better cause." Though prompt and ready, Mr. W. was not what may be called a good debater. He but seldom allowed himself to address the Senate until he was fully prepared by previous study to enter into the discussion ; and when he did so, he always acquitted himself well. He possesses the temperament of the North, and is apparently cold and selfish ; but I believe he is far from being so in fact. He wants the ease and familiarity of our vitriolic countrymen of the South, but is not insensible to the warmer feelings of our nature. He is just in all his dealings as a man, and wishes "to do unto others what he would that others should do unto him." His official papers are distinguished by great neatness and perspicuity. They contain nothing ambiguous, clumsy or unintelligible, but indicate a mind of great clearness and vigor, capable of irradiating what is obscure, and

rendering agreeable what is dull. Such is the present Secretary of the Treasury.

MARTIN VAN BUREN.

Mr Van Buren is small in stature, but his form is neat, agile and erect. The hair on each side of his head, once light, but now gray, is thick, and spreads out, while the crown is entirely bald, like the head of the elder Adams in the usual portraits of him. His eye is gray, his complexion fair, and his features regular. He wears a smile upon his countenance, when he addresses any one—his manners are bland and polite, and his deportment dignified and easy. Like Clay, Ewing, Webster, &c., he furnishes another striking illustration of the admirable tendency of our free form of government, to call out and reward the talents of those whom nature has favored.

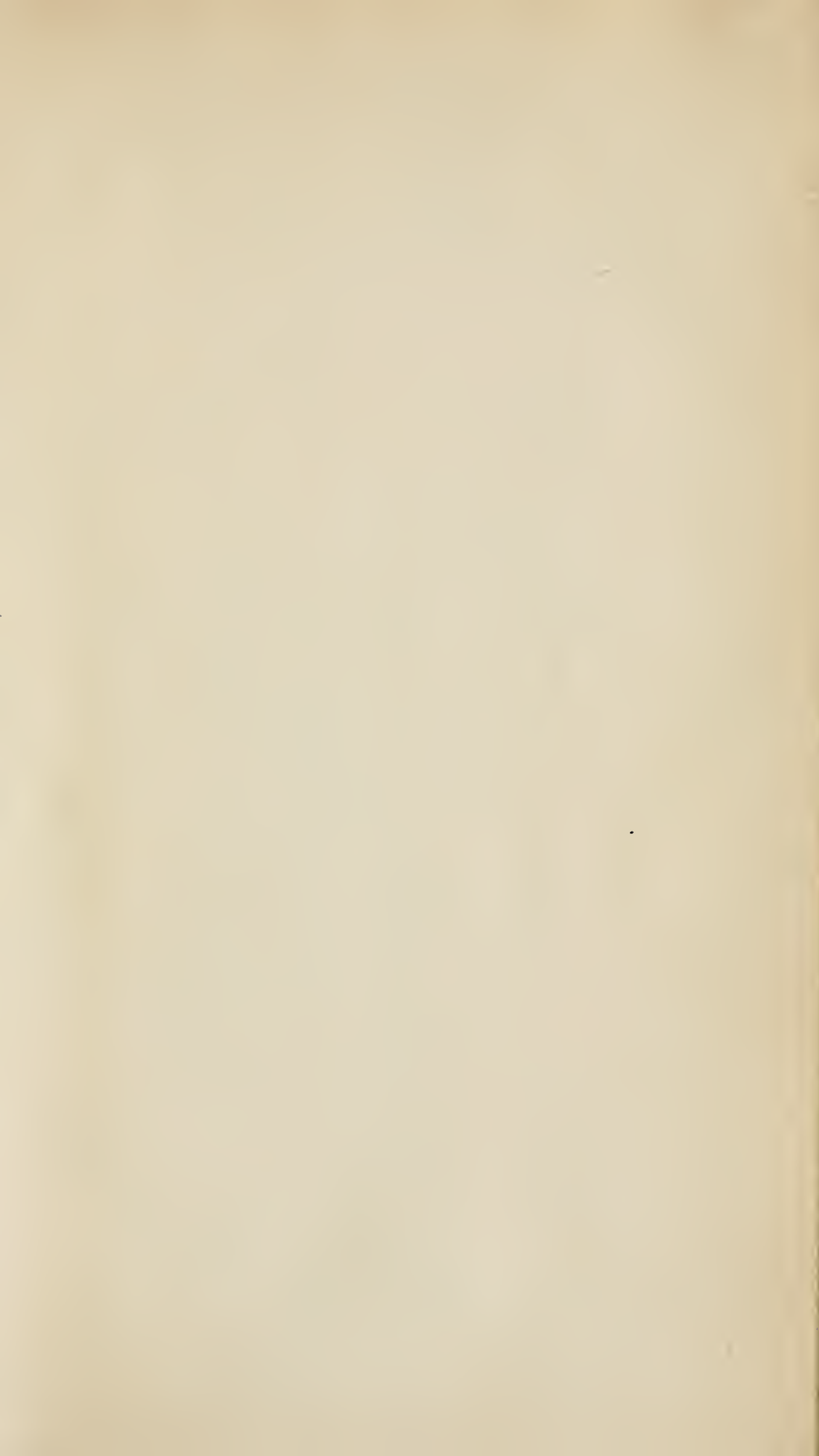
From the humblest condition in life, he has risen to the high sphere in which he now revolves by his own exertions. It is true that he has been thrown within the range and operation of favorable circumstances, but some intellectual power is necessary to render these propitious, even when they are favorable. "There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the floodgate lead to fortune;" but it requires tact and discrimination to ascertain when the tide is at its floodgate, and to avail one's

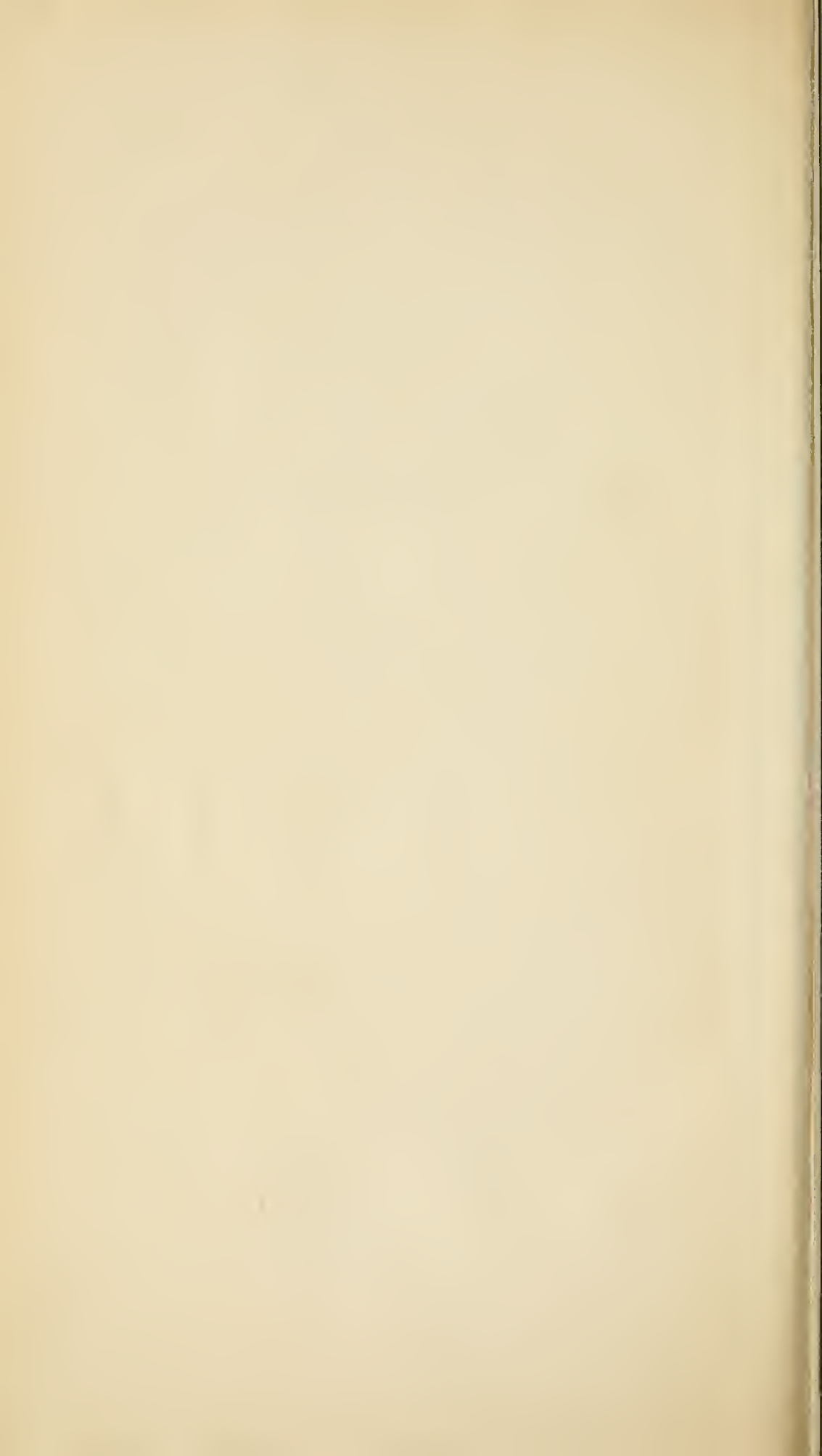
self of the proper moment to make the plunge, and float unresistingly on its bosom. Mr. Van Buren's almost intuitive knowledge of mankind, and his native energies, have always enabled him to avail himself of every favorable circumstance as it occurred. He has not paused when the propitious moment presented itself, but seized it with the energy of one determined on success, and bent on pushing his fortune to the utmost. Thrown early upon the world, and forced into contact with his fellow men, his knowledge of human nature has been rendered profound and valuable. All the great and leading motives to human action are familiar to him. He is too deeply skilled in the secret movements and mysterious operations of the human heart to judge always of others from himself; and having early been conscious that the mind is susceptible of change, he saw the wisdom and felt the necessity of circumspection in what he said or did. He has what the phrenologists call the bump of caution very large, which renders him cautious in his declarations and careful in his intercourse with society. Though he is not taciturn in company, he seldom says any thing that can be turned against him; and is more successful in drawing out the secrets of others, than any man of the same distinction in this country. Either from mental superiority, or his knowledge of the secret springs of human action, he has the faculty of acting with great power upon those with whom he comes in contact, and on whom

he feels any motive to operate. He possesses great secretiveness, never betrays his own thoughts or feelings, but always draws out the secrets of those whose secrets he feels an interest in knowing. The distinguishing features of his mind are quickness, penetration and acuteness. He is more ingenious than solid. He thinks more rapidly than profoundly; and as a speaker is more forensic than parliamentary. When a member of the Senate, he was accustomed to handle the subject under discussion with great adroitness, ability and tact; but more as a lawyer than a statesman, though his views have all the expansiveness which belong to the latter. He was distinguished as an advocate, and the habit of reasoning acquired at the bar, still clung to him in the halls of legislation. There are, indeed, but few parliamentary orators in our country, considering the great number of public speakers of which it boasts. The technicalities, hair-splitting and sophistry of the bar, are too frequently carried into the legislative assembly, and often spoil the effectiveness of parliamentary oratory. Mr. Van Buren had all the requisites necessary to constitute an expert and able debater; but as a debater few could rival the present Secretary of State. There was a readiness and preparation about Mr. Van Buren, that made him formidable as an opponent and efficient as a speaker. He had nothing however of bitterness in his character; he never retorted with acrimony, but always treated his opponents with

courtesy and urbanity. He appears to be always on the *qui vive*; never off his guard, and never offensive in his manner or address. In conversation as in political life, he is cautious and acute, always treading upon the skirts of a subject—throwing out thoughts as feelers, like the antennæ of insects, and playing upon the surface in an off-hand, agreeable manner. His colloquial powers are good, but not brilliant; not calculated “to set the table in a roar,” nor to dazzle by their splendor; but still attractive from an agreeable and unembarrassed flow of ideas, so varied as to suit the different capacities of those with whom he converses, and which the intercourse of a few moments enables him to ascertain. His ambition, “that last infirmity of a noble mind,” is unbounded; and has been but partially gratified. Nothing short of the high object in view will satisfy him, and no exertion will be spared that can enable him to attain it. The “weird sisters have breathed the word of promise to his ear,” and may not break it to the hope. As a presiding officer Mr. Van Buren conducts himself with propriety. He wants, however, the voice and person of his predecessor, Mr. Calhoun, and appears to some disadvantage, from the shortness of his stature; but he presides with great temper, impartiality and fairness; never manifesting the least irritation or uneasiness, even when made the target at which the shafts of party sarcasm are discharged, and warding off the blows by a smile of good nature, or a look of indifference.

Situated as he is, he finds it necessary to practice the maxim of Zeno, "to bear and forbear much"—a maxim of which experience has taught him the wisdom, and he sits amidst the storm of eloquent and bitter denunciation that sometimes rages around him, like a political petrification, calm, collected, and apparently unmoved. Mr. Van Buren is by nature, more of a politician than a statesman. With him "self-love and social" are not the same. He likes to plan and execute; but his plans are intended more for individual than general good. He has all the ingenuity of Maelzel, though differently directed; he can operate on the human machine with as much facility and skill as the latter upon his automata, and produce nearly the same harmony of action. With a more enlarged and expanded mind, Mr. Van Buren would, perhaps, have been more useful, but would not have been so distinguished or successful. What he will be as a statesman, should he ever reach the proud elevation at which he aims, time will determine; and the future historian will be able to assign him his appropriate nitch in the temple of Fame.





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